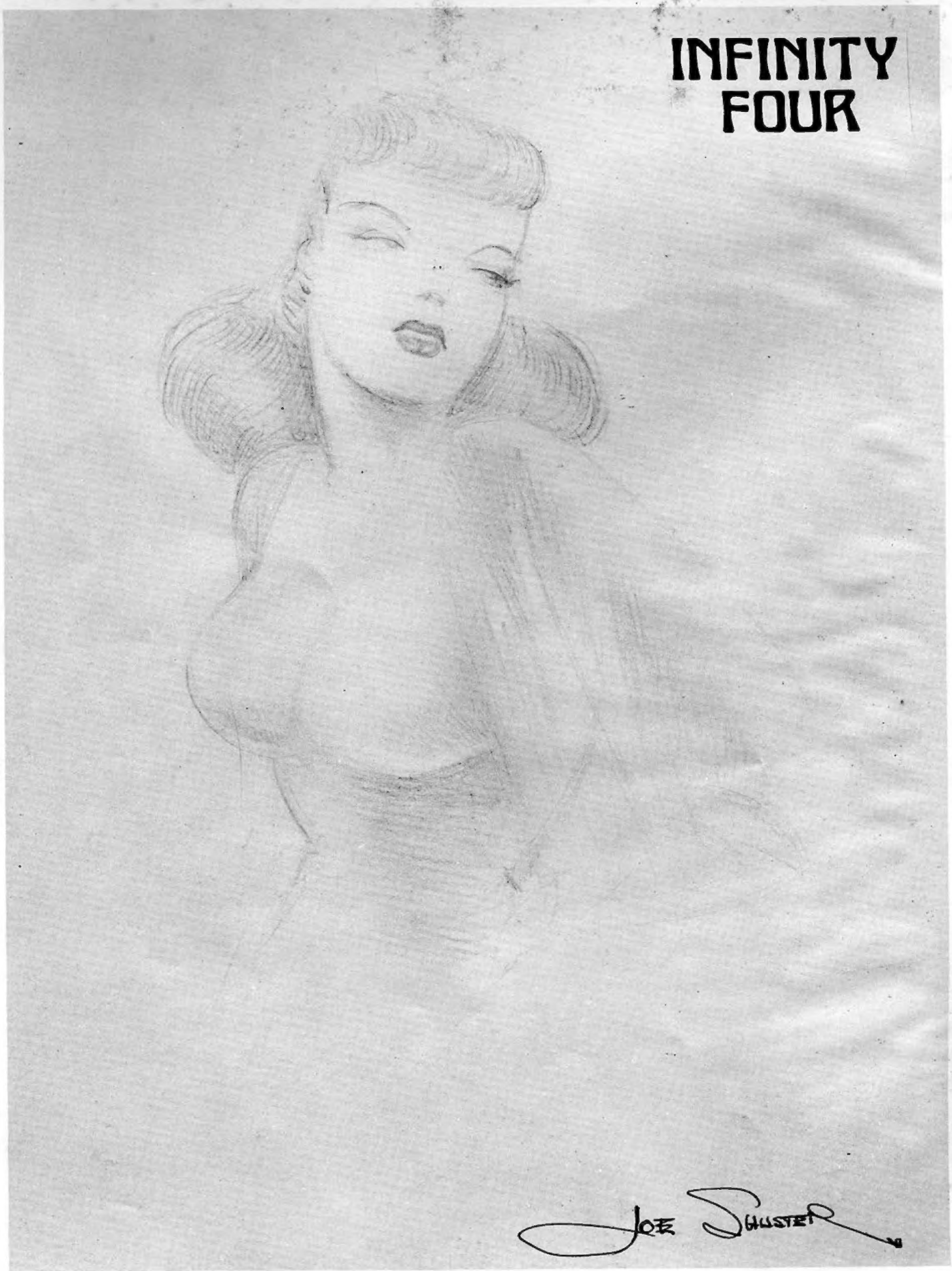
INFINITY · FOUR · 1972 · $3

INFINITY FOUR



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INFORMATION

All back issues sold out. please do not order from us.

This volume is dedicated to all the wonderful people who contributed time energy, and creativity to Infinity.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

As this is being written, we are nearing completion on our fourth issue, and once more, hope that we have in some way improved upon our last issue, dismissing an abundant amount of mistakes and adding a new set of ideas for the constant change INFINITY always hopes to show. Many people greatly enjoyed the concept of a two volume set, as was last issue's format—but change we preach, and change you get in the form of a large 84 pager with the extras like color slick covers and fancy pebble grain stock. We have done this to improve the caliber of our product, and, more important, because we had a full 84 pages of worthwhile material. Hence this issue's design. One of our major regrets was returning the subscriptions, necessitated by the drastic change in plans we have for next issue. We sincerely appreciate your support, though. The reason—INFINITY 5 will most probably be a hardcover book!! It will be all new material with an abundance of stripwork, some new features, beautiful art, and color dust-jacket by either: Jim Steranko or Jeff Jones. Slick paper and about 130 pages —destined to be our finest product. We do hope you will enjoy it, as it will be an end to INFINITY as you know it. College, other ideas, and conventions beckon us & as a result, our fifth will probably become our swansong.

Traditionally, we have asked our readers to contribute to our magazine. Traditionally, response from fans is almost zilch and so the hell with it. But we do want, as always, to hear your comments for our letters column, Viewpoint. And of course we feel credit should be given where its due, so we extend our gratitude to those who have helped in the production of our mag. Mike Kaluta, as always, produced an amazing strip that we've printed, as well as his work on our interview with him, + Steve Harper's aid on his interview. Frank Brunner's portfolio was done right on our deadline, and contains some of his best work. As always, Frank has strived to do his best material for INFINITY, for which we are grateful. Al Shuster, Star Trek Con's morgul and publisher of Witzend 1, did our printing, which accounts for whether or not all your pages were blank. Also we should give heaps of credit to Rip-Off Press's veterant editor, Jaxon, for his brilliant article "The Phenomenon" — truly a masterwork of writing. And, of course, we thank our parents; Moe, for his ever guiding hand, and Milty, for the business guidance and free Juvenia envelopes, as well as our mothers for their constant henpecking on economizing, without whom this would have been written in red ink instead of black. Finally, we thank, in most gratefulness, our readers, for their help in launching this fourth issue off the ground.

During the last nine months or so since our last issue, a great many things have happened in the field which have affected fandom. The artist became the fanzine spotlight.... Frank Brunner became an overnight success in general with his fabulous covers on Castle of Frankenstein, and, remarkably enough, INFINITY. Berni Wrightson's masterwork, Badtime Stories, was finally finished, as well as color work for Swank, under the watchful eye of Vaughn Bode'. Fandom's conventions number high as hell, and with Second Sunday in the Big Apple, people can attend a gathering every single month. INF has witnessed the death of two fine prozines, Anomaly and Reality (although there is a chance of us being the publishers for it at a later date), and the birth of Heritage and Phase, 2 fine additions to the field. Newfangles died, and the Comic Reader was reinstated with the help of Liam O'Conner's punching bag, Paul Levitz. Gordon Love's countless productions are beautiful and our respect for him knows no bounds. Alan Light's Buyers Guide finished its first year of publishing, a year of trials and tribulations out of which Buyers Guide emerged a brilliant success, capturing an advertising audience of 3500 people and helping fandom immensely. EC lived again with the EC convention as well as the EC Horror Library. We heard the great news that Graham Ingles is alive. Our own convention, CREATION, came and went, proving an instant smash success; we watched the underground comix movement expand and upgrade incredibly, and saw the comics slowly going downhill, despite the influx of new artists. A newspaper for fandom, The Monster Times, finally hit the stands, and Infinity tested its no. 1 experiment: distribution. It worked.

All back issues are now sold out, so please do not order any from us. We still have a good stock of CREATION posters, beautiful 3 color posters by Kenneth Smith, a full 11″ by 14″, & available in blue or gold, for 50¢ each. And we also have a large stock of fanzines, so if you need any mags on the fandom market, just drop us a line.

Once more, we thank you. Now, INFINITY 4!

Peace.
Adam Malin
Gary Berman

JEFF JONES
JOE SINNOTT

FASTEST GUN IN THE WEST

SALOON
CHRIST! WHAT A RELIC!...
I WONDER WHY HE WANTS TA DIE!
OKAY, GRAMPS! I'M HERE! GO FOR IT!
POW POW
POW
DAD...

COMICS?
COMIX!
FEAR
FEAR
jaxon

A PHENOMENON

FOREWORD:

In the summer of 1971, after having repeatedly discussed the idea of a giant, all encompassing study of the underground comix movement with Jaxon, Rip-Off Press's editor and artist, I was startled to receive in the mail a jumble of paper and cut-outs, accompanied by a long letter of explanation and layout ideas, all for what would become the following article, "The Phenomenon." Jaxon had researched, thought out, drafted and redrafted what I consider *the finest* paper ever written on the comix movement, and sent a large batch of panels, covers, and so forth, to illustrate the article, as well as his great "Comix!" picture. To those of you who still have the mistaken impression that underground cartoonists are all a bunch of horny old geezers with dead bodies lying around their skid row flophouses, this essay should dispel any further belief in that. May I thank Jaxon for the care and effort he has taken in order to produce this article, and may I congratulate him for a first grade piece of writing.

PROLOGUE:

I feel that INFINITY, being the best new magazine serving fandom, is the ideal sounding board for an inquiry into the present and future status of comics. Any service that we can render to insure the vitality and growth of this medium will, I feel, be in the best interest of all fandom, as well as the industry and the artists and writers themselves. It is in this spirit that I have written the article. I am attempting neither sensationalism nor controversy, but rather, a searching analysis of industry practices which inhibit and stifle creativity and which the underground is attempting to circumvent. I trust that the end result of my criticism will be constructive. *Jaxon*

by Jaxon, Editor of the Rip-Off Press

The term "underground" comics is an unfortunate one. Nevertheless, we're stuck with it and will have to make the best of the label until it occurs to the news disseminators and slogan makers that the comics of the underground are closer to the concepts of the medium's founding fathers than are those of the official comic industry. Personally, I prefer the simple distinction, "comix", when speaking of the trend toward the revitalization of the cartoon strip. It lacks certain connotations which I feel prejudice the sincerity of our movement in the eyes of our potential readers, and perhaps in the eyes of our own.

In a sense, it may seem glamorous to think of oneself in the underground. After all, underground networks have traditionally been an honorable means of resisting oppression in occupied countries. Realistically, however, we are not a captive people, except insofar as we fetter minds. And our business is conducted in the same mundane manner as other commercial endeavors. It is doubtless a wise policy, as the Boy Scouts say, to "Be Prepared", but for the present time, we are free to ply our work on the open market, and only a steadfast paranoiac would insist on an armed guard posted outside the print shop.

As far as I'm concerned, the real danger to the continuing vitality of comix—will come from outside commercial exploitation by people who don't understand what we're doing and who see comix as a chance to make a fast buck, another fad to cash in on. Such was the fate of the great poster trip, one of the underground innovations.

I do not fear, as do many people in the counter-culture, that the force of uniformity, be they in the guise of law and order, or the more simple threat of economic reprisal, can stem the tide of free expression now rampant in comix. I do not fear the consequences of another misinformed Doctor Wertham rising to denounce the Satanic influence of comix. For one thing, we've seen 20 years of "cleaner" comics in the country and those things he said would rectify themselves as a consequence have grown steadily worse.

Doctor Wertham was preoccupied with the idea of "monkey-see-monkey-do". He assumed that because a comic strip story depicts axe murders, everybody would go out and murder someone with an axe. . . . It should have as easily occurred to him that just the opposite might happen; that seeing the thing revealed in all its disgusting detail would provide the fantasy indulgence required to deter a real crime!! It is a well known fact, many therapeutic measures are designed with no other purpose in mind then to help "sick" people act out their fantasies and thereby render them harmless. I think, today's psychologists are better prepared on the explosive nature of repressed fantasies than was Dr. Wertham. The man was wrong. Bill Gaines realized it, but he was a man ahead of his time and without the means necessary to prevail over the witchhunting mentality of Wertham and those minions. We are in a position to do so on a scale entirely suited to our needs.

Even should some agency of thought control decide to "get tough" with comix, I am confident that the medium within which we create our illusions will live on and prosper so long as free spirits exist, because free expression is as basic to the nature of comics as it is to democracy itself. That is why comics burst forth and blossomed in a country that has traditionally held its freedom dear, and why they suffer most during periods of crisis in the democratic process, the process whereby free men relate to one another.

I feel that comics are an essential—and in a manner of speaking, a sacred — institution of a free society; sacred because of their sheer profanity, because of their ability to arouse us, cajole us, involve us, to knock us down, so that we may raise ourselves. I think that many Americans sense this also and feel protective toward comics, realizing in some vague fashion that they are reflective of deep currents within our society. Naturally, not many people will own up to taking them seriously, and this is as it should be. One of the inherent beauties of the medium is its ability to function simultaneously on different levels of perception—comics can pack the wallop of brain surgery and still be shrugged off as "just kidstuff".

I fail to see how we, or any self-supporting movement toward free expression, can be effectively suppressed as long as we remain true to the wants and needs of our audience. And the truth is, oppression cannot still the people's yearning for "funnies". Boredom perhaps, but not oppression. Oppression merely whets the people's appetite for products of the cartoonist's imagination, and where comics suffer to the point of becoming inane, empty and "correct", others will rise to take their place and continue to stir the imagination of the people. I am convinced no free people with a rudimentary level of technology will be content without their comics page. Free people have hopes, fears, dreams, fantasies and forbidden thoughts which they will not suffer to see extinguished, and this is the proper and traditional role of comics—to indulge people's fantasies. Find a culture without comics and you'll find a people firmly under the grip of a tyrant. Even there you'll probably encounter graffiti, the oppressed man's humor.

This being the case, how is it possible that establishment comics in America are facing a creative and economic slump? Why are sales sagging and new titles dying on the stem? Why are the Sunday funnies getting smaller and fewer when once they were an essential factor in every empire builder's publishing scheme, to the point where a single artist's departure from a syndicate could shake up Hearst himself? Why has the adult market, once the broad economic foundation of comicdom, become lost to the industry? And why, simultaneous with the agonies of the comic industry, are *comix* prospering and facing unlimited future possibilities?

I believe the decline began when the comic book industry meekly bowed to the idiocy of a Senate subcommittee and shackled itself with a "Code" that afforded artists no chance of saying anything meaningful about the real world. Read the Code sometime. It makes the most pious catechism look bland. How the industry ever thought they could comply with the Comics Code and produce anything vaguely resembling the tradition of visual humor as it developed in this country is a mystery to me. It was the most total capitulation of creative freedom, voluntary or otherwise, I can recall in recent history, and it happened in our country, and with minor recent changes, it's still being adhered to. Small wonder that the youth of America, nurtured in the tradition of men that spoke strong words like "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death", have turned their backs on the comics.

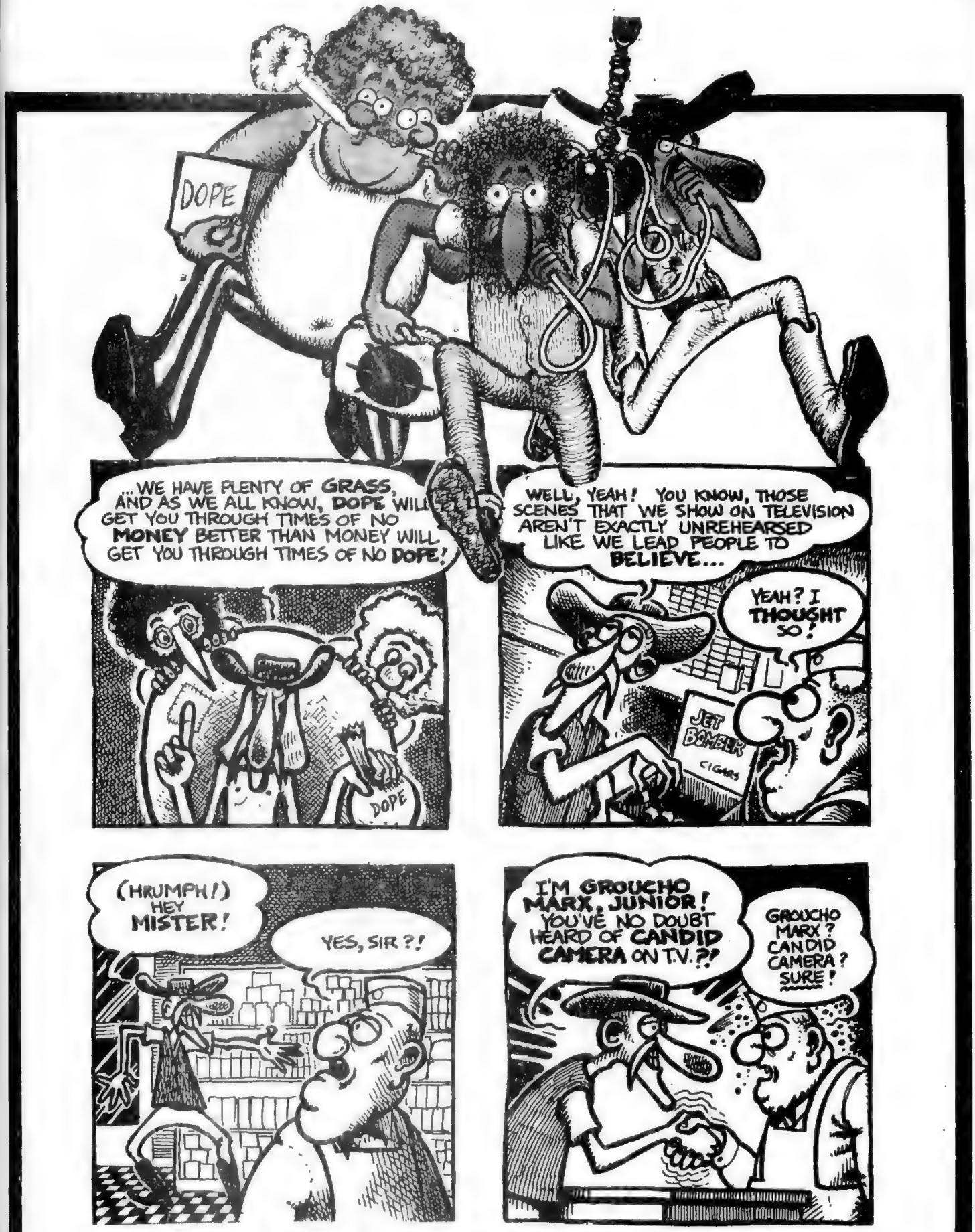
I don't know how many men working in establishment comics feel this way about the Code, but SOMEBODY that cares about the role of comics in light of the cultural quakes that have occurred within our society over the past 20 years had better speak up for change. Unt they do, we'll keep on raising hell and storming the gat from outside. And more and more good artists wit something outrageously funny to say will join the ran of the underground and strive to do what the industr with all its giant presses, technical know-how and vas distribution system, should be doing. One day the indus try, like a cuckolded husband, will wake up and find it bed empty. I'm occasionally plagued with the though that perhaps the industry would like to offer somethin new, except nobody has enough faith in their vision t gamble on it, with rare exceptions. If this is the cas things are incredibly bad. It would mean that the entir thing is on the verge of collapse and it's just a matte of time.

In contrast to the gloomy reports that trickle in con cerning the health of our big brother, I must say tha comix are proliferating lustily and show no sign of th recession that surrounds us. Perhaps some sceptics wil lay this prosperity to the fact that we've been function ing in a state of acute depression since our inception. Nevertheless, there are more publishers of comix now than ever before and all are succeeding beyond their level of probability and fondest expectations. The Print Mint, Rip-Off Press, San Francisco Comicbook Company, Last Gasp Eco-Funnies and Krupp Comic Works are the major ones. Further, we're accumulating the means of production and are acquiring more sophisticated equipment and skills with every step. Eventually we will own and operate every phase in the creation, production and distribution of our books and will be dependent upon no outside force that would presume to control or contain our energy. To date, there have been color interiors, 3-D interiors, fatter books and recently, the first camera separated 4-color cover. Granted these are old hat by industry standards, but considering these techniques have been self taught, the strides we've made in the past two years have been remarkable.

Apart from the technical aspects of production, we are attempting to explore as many various ideas under the broad heading of comix as occur to us. At first, comix reflected the visual fantasmagoria carried over from the psychedelic poster phenomenon, stressing abstract extravaganzas not often seen in comics since their early days. Coupled with this primarily non-narrative, stylistic approach was the work of other artists who did employ a storyline, but in a manner unknown and unthinkable in terms of "proper" comics. The story line more than not was a non-essential or at least non-sensical blurb whose only purpose was to render the apocalyptic/sexual fantasies depicted totally incomprehensible to a normal state of consciousness.

It is rare indeed for the storytelling and artistic gifts to reside side by side in one cartoonist, yet all great comic strip artists do combine these two gifts. It has been observed that this is a weakness in many underground strips, particularly in their early stages. Most artists readily admit that they are primarily artists, and writers secondarily. With some it is the opposite; they draw because they have a story to tell and can't find any one else to do it for them. I find both orientations equally appealing and anyone who would doubt the place of an artist who relies primarily on dazzling graphics to carry his point should examine many of the early Sunday funnies where the same tendencies prevailed—visuals run riot, bound together by the most tenuous of gag lines, with a total disregard for the commonplace so integral to modern soap-opera strips like the "Heart of Juliet Jones".

Many of the cartoonists in comix were and still are profoundly affected by the E.C. tradition where powerful graphics combined with a coherent story line, and several books have devoted themselves to carrying this genre one step further. Many ventures along the horror, science-fiction and fantasy lines so beautifully developed by E.C. are planned. This is where writing is un-

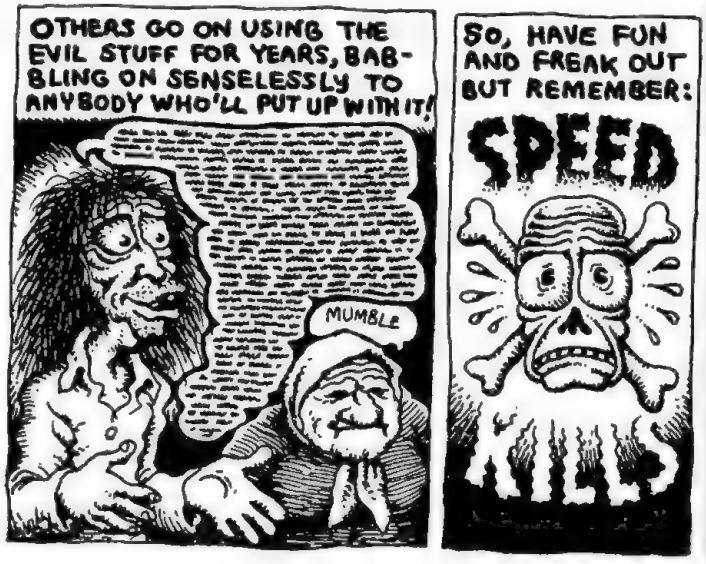

DOPE
...WE HAVE PLENTY OF GRASS, AND AS WE ALL KNOW, DOPE WILL GET YOU THROUGH TIMES OF NO MONEY BETTER THAN MONEY WILL GET YOU THROUGH TIMES OF NO DOPE!
DOPE
WELL, YEAH! YOU KNOW, THOSE SCENES THAT WE SHOW ON TELEVISION AREN'T EXACTLY UNREHEARSED LIKE WE LEAD PEOPLE TO BELIEVE...
YEAH? I THOUGHT SO!
JET BOMBER
CIGARS
(HRUMPH!) HEY MISTER!
YES, SIR?!
I'M GROUCHO MARX, JUNIOR! YOU'VE NO DOUBT HEARD OF CANDID CAMERA ON T.V.?!
GROUCHO MARX? CANDID CAMERA? SURE!

One of the many facets of Gilbert Shelton, the current cultural heroes the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers. Shelton is one of the few comix artists syndicated in the underground press. He occasionally dabbles with themes of nuclear holocaust, as in his "H-Bomb Funnies".

THE MAN IN HIS YOUTH IS PATHETICALLY HOPEFUL AND OPTIMISTIC...
RAH RAH RAH
...AS HE GROWS MORE "MATURE" HE BEGINS TO "FACE UP TO THE HARSH REALITIES" OF LIFE...
...AND ENDS UP OLD AND EMBITTERED, REGRETFUL OF SHATTERED DREAMS, FEELING CHEATED BY FATE, HIS DAYS FILLED WITH ACHES AND PAINS SO THAT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO DEATH!!

Illustrator-innovator Robert Crumb's popular "Despair" comix deals with the human condition rarely seen in the industry comic books. Artwork above by R. Crumb..

BUS STOP
SNEE-IT!
I DON'T SEE NO MUTHAFUCKIN' BUS, STANLEY,
GODDAM, THIS DISGUISE IS HOT! I GOTTA UNLOAD THESE KILO'S BEFORE I DROP!!
WYZINSKI'S MEAT MARKET 206 W. 25TH ST.
HOW MANY, FRANK?
GIMME TEN KEYS AN' SOME SPEED IF YA GOT ANY.


OTHERS GO ON USING THE EVIL STUFF FOR YEARS, BABBLING ON SENSELESSLY TO ANYBODY WHO'LL PUT UP WITH IT!
MUMBLE
SO, HAVE FUN AND FREAK OUT BUT REMEMBER:
SPEED
KILLS

A comix presentation of two sides of dope; funny, in the case of Dave Sheridan's "The Dealings of Dealer McDope" (left), and a warning of danger in this particular panel by Robert Crumb. (above). Comix draws fine lines when it comes to "advertising" the varying merits of psychedelics, and are virtually unanimous in their repudiation of speed and smack and other hard drugs. It is interesting to note that the industry comics have just recently mentioned drugs in their books, their books, where previously they completely ignored the problem.

deniably crucial to the success of a strip and various artists interested in this area are readily collaborating with script men.

I'm fully aware that it is a common practice nowadays to dismiss the entire comix phenomenon as nothing more than a showcase for sexual perversion and sick fantasy. But I think the coming year will witness the appearance of several books that will not allow fandom to so easily discredit the sincerity and ability of comix to effectively deal with themes in the E.C. tradition. UP FROM THE DEEP, FANTAGOR, SLOW DEATH and ABYSS are but the first of books planned to usher in a new era not seen since the early 50's. Whether or not fandom will support this direction remains to be seen, but at least it will be given a chance to put its money where its mouth is and where it avows its heart is.

In contrast to the way the industry works, with us each comix is a totally new experience and is planned with no concern for perpetuating any particular concept that came before. Certain themes do repeat themselves, such as war, ecology, religion, cultural alternatives, etc., but since we see ourselves as primarily experimenters, we cannot allow our work to follow a preconceived formula.

Many politically oriented people in the youth culture have criticized the comix because they will not completely devote themselves to the propagation of radical politics. There are too many levels of reality for us to become trapped in the coils of anyone's dogmatism. I for one consider the art of persuasion to be as subtle and elusive as the colors of a chameleon. Perhaps the most effective way of reshuffling cultural values and creating social change is not always the most obvious one. For instance, some cartoonists are exploring romance comix with devastating results and others are doing essentially nostalgia comix, dealing with the 50's.

One would think that out of all these focal points being pioneered or rediscovered by comix, the industry itself would get some clue as to what was on the minds of their audience—at least the post-adolescent ones—but still they grind out their castrated superhero and watered-down "horror" titles. Ideally, the industry should encourage the exploration of new trends, even to the point of working with radical off-shoots under subsidiary arrangements, much as the record industry does, and thereby have immediate access to "grassroots" developments which they could in turn promote directly once the popularity of any particular expression achieved a certain degree of success. This would save them having to try and maneuver their clumsy apparatus around to embrace what they would *like* to think was the "new thing", only to find out too late that it was a total bomb. The industry cannot change the reading taste of the public. They can only respond to it, and to respond to it, they've got to first know what the public wants. If they don't know, it could hardly hurt to try and find out.

This leads me to a discussion of certain misconceptions that the industry may hold, and fandom in general for that matter, about underground artists and their aims. Some of the more significant misconceptions I will attempt to deal with. Others I can only mention and dismiss in utter contempt—accusations on the spurious level of maintaining that we are all illiterate perverts, that we wish to destroy comics, to befoul the medium, that we are socially irresponsible, that we simply wish to "glorify" sex and violence, that we are incapable of creating anything "meaningful".

I could waste my time on this level by endlessly pointing out that we are not illiterate, that just in terms of the literature of comics, the comix artists pride themselves with a working knowledge of people like Barks, Eisner, Gould, Fine, Raymond, Frazetta, Ingles, Hogarth, Kubert, Foster, Kurtzman, Wolverton, Meskin, Cole, Sterrit, Kirby, Toth, Everette, etc.—not to mention the broader historical scope of graphics in general —Goya, Rembrandt, Brueghel, Klee, Doré, Dulac, Pyle, Wyeth, Nast, Busch, etc., etc. I could argue intermiably that we do not create or even purposely cater to sex and violence, but simply mirror the existing society around us, and only reflect two of the elements inextricabily embedded in the fabric of the universe—and present in most "great works of art". I could even make a good case for the idea that instead of slurring the good name of comics, we're actually one of the few forces moving toward upholding the time-honored tradition of the medium and that it is the industry, not us, who is out in left field.

But to dwell on these abstract aspects of comics is like arguing about religion. Both sides come away more steadfast and fanatical than when they began. Only time will reveal which is closer to the truth, and I am content to deliver the claims of comix to the test of time, because time is on our side.

Certain misconceptions I will gladly discuss, however, because they have a definite utilitarian function. One is the idea that comix artists really aspire to break into the "big time" of the industry and that their work in the underground is no more than just an awkward phase in their careers. Traditionally (in the industry) artists have first worked as apprentices—a euphemism for lousy jobs—and gradually crept upward in the organization until one day, at the height of their creative powers, they could sit behind a desk and hassle over production deadlines and details. I don't know one artist in comix who aspires to this form of death. And it might just be possible that the industry could not induce any of these artists to work for them unless some drastic changes were made in the industry's regimented approach to comics.

Another false notion is that we are content to remain an insignificant speck in terms of distribution, that we will never be a force to be reckoned with on the scale that the industry is involved in. Probably the industry would like to think so, judging from the fate of a prosperous E.C. at the hands of its jealous competitors, but we are working toward pressruns in the hundreds of thousands, not just tens of thousands. We are exploring alternate methods of distribution to further our expansion, based on the conviction that the customary route is obsolete.

Yet another erroneous idea that has gained some credibility is that we are an "ingroup" and hostile to other artists outside our "scene". I believe that any artist with a spark of fire that has tried to get into comix has made it and been welcomed with open arms. This is not to say that we are without standards, but they are based on the creative exchange of ideas, not trivialities like lifestyles.

But perhaps the misconception which comix will be called upon the most to "justify" or "explain" is its seeming preoccupation with sex, violence, and dope. I'm at a loss to come up with an answer that would pass as acceptable to the people who would question the right of comix to deal with these or any other "forbidden" topics. I know that down deep their objections are not so much to the way we depict these themes, but to our right to depict them at all.

I might be tempted to answer, as R. Crumb's Mr. Natural did when questioned about the meaning of "diddy-wah-diddy": "If you don't know by now lady, don't MESS with it". But if the inquisitors were fans of long standing, I'd probably just ask them if they have ever wondered what Frazetta or Wood or Williamson could do with total freedom to depict explicit sex in a comic strip. Or perhaps what Alex Raymond might have done with Flash and Queen Frigia, alone, out in that frozen cave (except for her snug fur coat), if he had felt totally free to do it. Or maybe Hal Foster, back when Prince Valiant carried Aleta off by force from the Misty Isles and drug her around the Near East chained to his arm.

NO.4
ADULTS ONLY!
ZAP COMIX
50¢
GILBERT SHELTON

I'm glad of the rich tapestry that we've acquired from these artists, but I wish they'd had the opportunity, as we have, to work out their sexual fantasies as well. I've got a feeling it would have been incredibly beautiful and wouldn't have produced a society with half as many psychotics as we've got running around today.

The same goes for the explicit portrayal of violence in comix. As others have said before me (unheeded, of course), I would think a greater deterrent of violence would be to show what actually happens to people when you put a bullet in their brain or a knife in their throat than it would be to show them decorously laid out with not a mark on them. If the victim in comics never bleeds, what's to prevent some impressionable souls from getting the false idea that it's *alright* to kill and maim, since obviously the victim suffers no pain? This theme of hypocrisy runs throughout the Comics Code: "Let's pretend it doesn't happen so it won't". The facts of life are quite different and the question is whether comics will attempt to deal with those facts or ignore them and hope they won't exist.

Apart from the mistaken ideas and objections to sex and violence in comix, both of which in truth are near and dear to the hearts of all red-blooded Americans, there still remains the objection to dope. I understand artists have been sampling its effects in a multitude of forms for thousands of years. A brief perusal of artifacts of antiquity will make one wonder if people could have created anything so weird in their "right" minds. Probably they weren't; they were usually stoned on something ranging from juice to things a bit more chemically intricate.

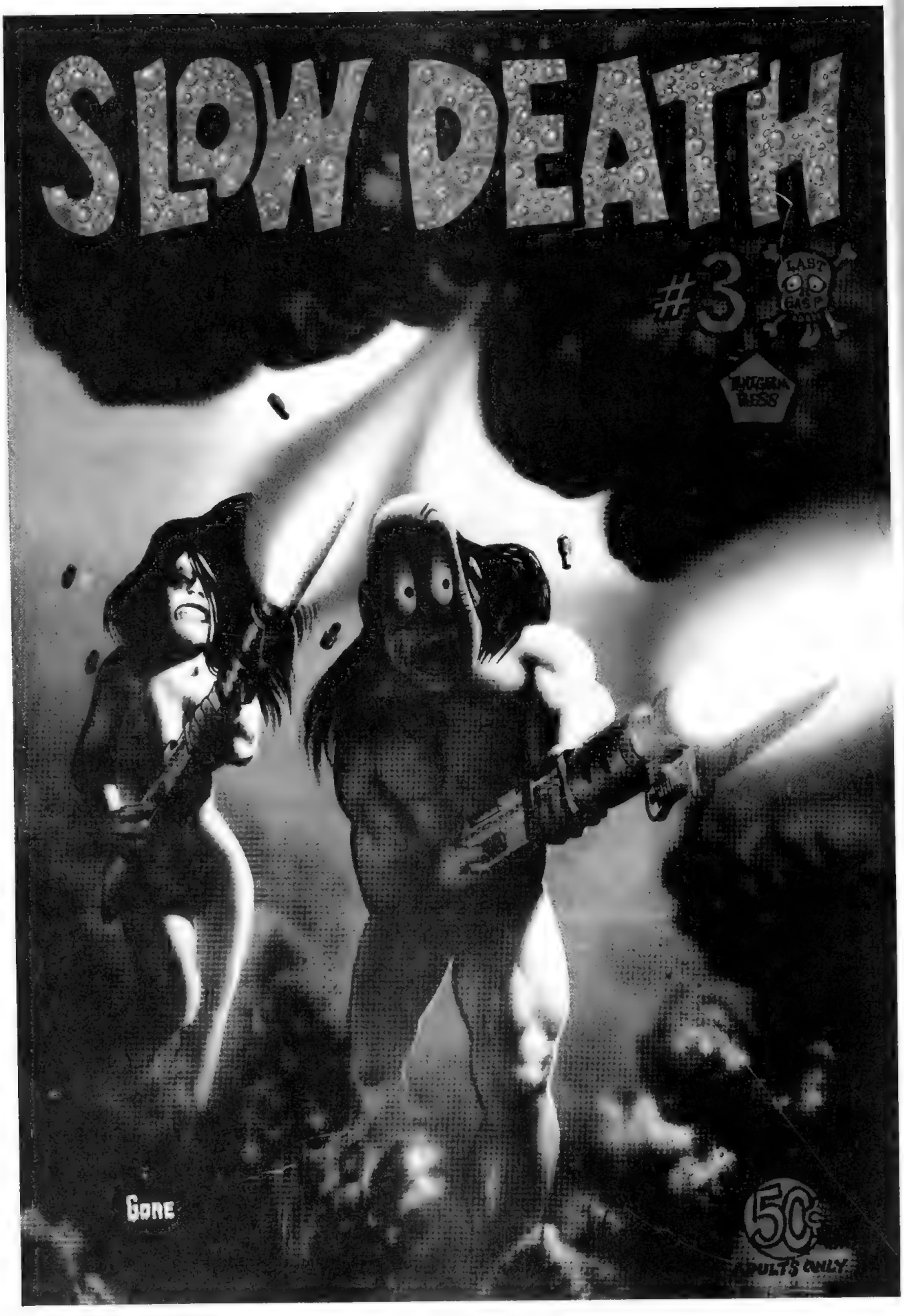
As this relates to comics. I can hardly imagine a cartoonist in the underground, no matter how far out he was on drugs, producing a strip as consistently strange as those of Winsor McCay or George Herriman, both of whose influence in the development of the medium is beyond question. And there have been other "old-timers" just as outrageous. For instance, a number of past strips were based upon the humorous aspects of Prohibition, a situation not without its parallel in contemporary dope comix. Doubtless many people were shocked by the doings of Snuffy Smith in his prime, just as some are shocked now at the doings of Dealer McDope. The point is, it's no one's business if an artist does or does not smoke grass or drink Scotch or sniff bicycle seats. If he's good, he's good. If he's messed up, that'll be fairly obvious too.

There is another side to comix which I feel may be even more revolutionary than the changes and innovations within the covers of the books themselves. I am referring to the change in the economic and editorial structure that the artists of comix have initiated and are bound to see preserved.

First, all publishers of comix work with the artists in what virtually amounts to a partnership arrangement. By this I mean the artists share directly in the continued success of each and every book produced. Apart from advances made by the publisher, the artists receive a lump sum royalty on reruns of their work in all subsequent editions. We do not sell our work on a flat fee basis. We prefer to retain the right to share in its eventual success, even tho our immediate compensation might be less than if we accepted a flat fee and relinquished our ownership. This is a pivotal concept in comix: that artists have the right to profit in direct proportion to the financial success of their work.

We also retain the copyright to our published work, as well as our originals. We work at our own individual speed. Some books appear every 3 or 4 months; some take a year in preparation. We believe it's better for all concerned to spend a year producing one gem than it is to have to hump-up behind deadlines just to produce a lot of nothing on a regular basis.

We do not recognize an editorial authority higher than our own individual judgement. Comix evolve out of the


SLOW DEATH
#3
LAST GASP
GORE
50¢
ADULTS ONLY

matrix of artistic ferment, thru bouncing ideas off one another, and suggesting to each other more effective ways of rendering particular scenes, etc. They emerge slowly and when the book has been finished from cover to cover, the publisher is handed the complete package. It is not subject to his likes or dislikes; he either accepts it or he doesn't. In the rare instance that he doesn't, another publisher is always eager to snap it up.

We feel, and to this point, our publishers also feel, that it is the business of the artists to know what they want to say and how best to depict it. Otherwise, the publisher would be drawing strips himself. This is mutually understood; would that it were also true of the publishers in the industry.

The truth, unfortunately, is something entirely different. The industry does not work *with* their artists. It is not interested in the personal growth of individual artists; in fact, it *fears* such growth because of the supposed threat to its own position of power. Consequently the industry does everything possible to ensure that all its artists are interchangeable units that can be switched from character to character, from title to title, with no noticeable difference, based on the mandates of respective deadlines.

For some strange reason the industry has decided it is not in their best interests to encourage diversity among comic artists. It should be apparent that the best way to achieve vitality and sales, and perhaps the only way to keep artists sane and self-respecting, is to do just the opposite—to let the artists freely pursue their own natural inclinations and inspirations.

And what about the attitudes of "establishment" artists? Can we assume that because they continue to earn their daily bread from the industry that they necessarily approve of their working situation as the best of all possible structures? I think not. Ironically enough, even artists that "play by the rules" but take inordinate pride and time in their work seem to suffer more on the pay end than the artists that do no more than just passable work—not exactly the best incentive system to promote excellence. It is undeniable that cartoonists in this country have been encouraged to think of themselves as "professionals" like any other white collar worker—to just meet their deadlines and not ask too many questions or show too much initiative. While this kind of thinking is not exactly in keeping with the historical view of the artistic temperament, it doubtless has its advantages to the industry. There are exceptions, and a few artists have already publicly spoken out and even pursued their own fancies to the extent of publishing them at their own expense, usually only to be overwhelmed and dismayed at all the hassles and the drain on their energy, which could rightly be put to better use drawing.

Probably nothing would upset the industry so much as the sudden appearance in its midst of an undeniable genius—someone with a style so unique and unusual that he would instantly be recognizable to his readers, someone who was already so good that his talent could not be wasted in mimicry of the industry's stock cliches. The appearance of a genius in the underground is met with great rejoicing, not with apprehension. We do not have to "decide" what to do with him; he decides himself.

We believe that artists should be given the opportunity and encouraged to reveal their inner compulsions in the context of their work. We recognize the intrinsic merit of stylistic originality and know that individual variation strengthens, rather than detracts from, our collective result. We're not interested in fostering a generation of cartoonists who *must* approach their work piecemeal—one who does nothing but pencil, another who only inks, yet another who letters his life away. We want artists to become creators in the total sense of the word, to reflect life as it filters through their central nervous system, to amuse us, to scare the shit out of us—in short, to explores the human condition, its possibilities and its limitations.

I believe that as comix continue to surge ahead and the artists of the establishment see the opening spectrum of this freewheeling medium, they will become increasingly attracted by its potential. Especially since comix are doubling their expansion every quarter and will soon have the ability to pay the rates artists now make working for the industry anyway, not to mention our royalty arrangement. I wonder how high the industry will have to build its fence to keep the artists from breaking out.

What indeed can the industry offer artists, particularly newcomers, that comix can't? We do not sandwich our art inbetween endless advertisements or destroy the impact of good material by scrounging through the reprint bin of 15 years ago to cut costs and fill the rest of the book. We are not interested in perpetuating characters beyond the initial creative thrust that gave them life and meaning, merely to serve an economic and administrative goal. We do not tie our creators to a rat-race schedule or compartmentalize their talent into segments of an assembly line. Any technical process that is available to industry artists will inevitably be at the disposal of the comix, and we consider it mandatory to develop new ones.

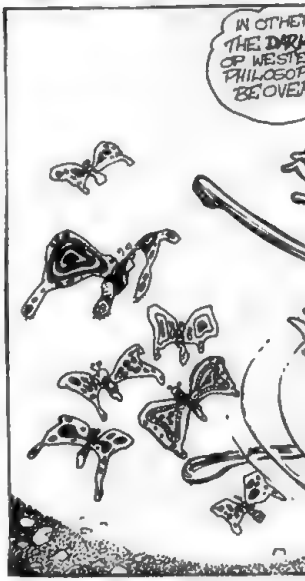
When finally released, our books are meticulously sought out, cherished by their readers, and passed from hand to hand, from country to country. We are dedicated to our work and derive a strong sense of purpose from it. We expect to make mistakes, and we have created an economic structure that will bend with our errors and not topple. How many times can the industry afford to be wrong before it is strangled by its own bulk? Is it so interested in holding onto what little that remains of the legacy of comics that no change is contemplated?

"WE OF THE BOTOMIAN PROTECTORATE SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE UNIT WELCOME YOUR INTRUSION INTO OUR EXTREMELY HOSPITABLE SECTOR AND INVITE YOU TO BE OUR GUESTS YOU SEE, UNDER DIVINE (PAUSE) BOTOMIAN LAW, ALL STRANGERS, OUTSIDERS, LOITERERS, GEEKS, GYPSIES, AND CLOWNS ARE SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE ARREST!"
HANDS UP, PLEASE

I would suggest that industry comics reassess its present course in relation to the mainstream of the medium as it has evolved over the past 70 years. If it can gather no conclusion from such an examination, if it persists in perpetuating the tedious central fallacy that "supermen" have charted the currents of history, instead of the nameless and forgotten tide of plain, ordinary humanity, then comics will die of natural causes, like the Chicago stockyards. And if it dies, maybe no one will even notice, because "underground" comix will have already made the industry superfluous.

WE'RE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE, SPIGGY... CRUEL ANARCHISTS HAVE PERPETRATED AN INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE IMAGE-SHATTERING HOAX ON THE AMERICAN PUBLIC...
INSIDIOUS HORDES OF PINKISH PSYCHOTICS..
SHOOT
SHOOT
1

I'M DRAWN TO THE FULCRUM OF THE COSMOS LIKE A HARLET TO A PATTYMELT. MY RICKIES ARE RAMPET & THERE'LL BE NO TIME TO REMOVE ANY IMPACTED HAIRS THIS DAY!
GRUNT!
2



A series of panels
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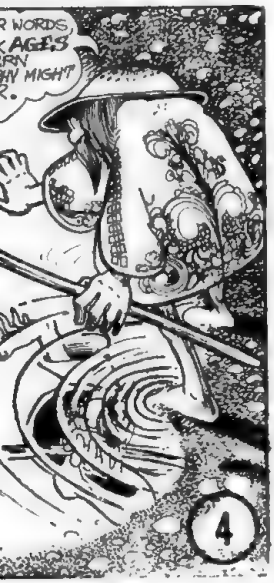


that indicate something of the scope of comix, equal-
political satire, 2) comic absurdity, 3) heroic fantasy
temptation, 5) cultural nostalgia, 6) existential shag-
ry folks, superheroes seem to be in short supply.....

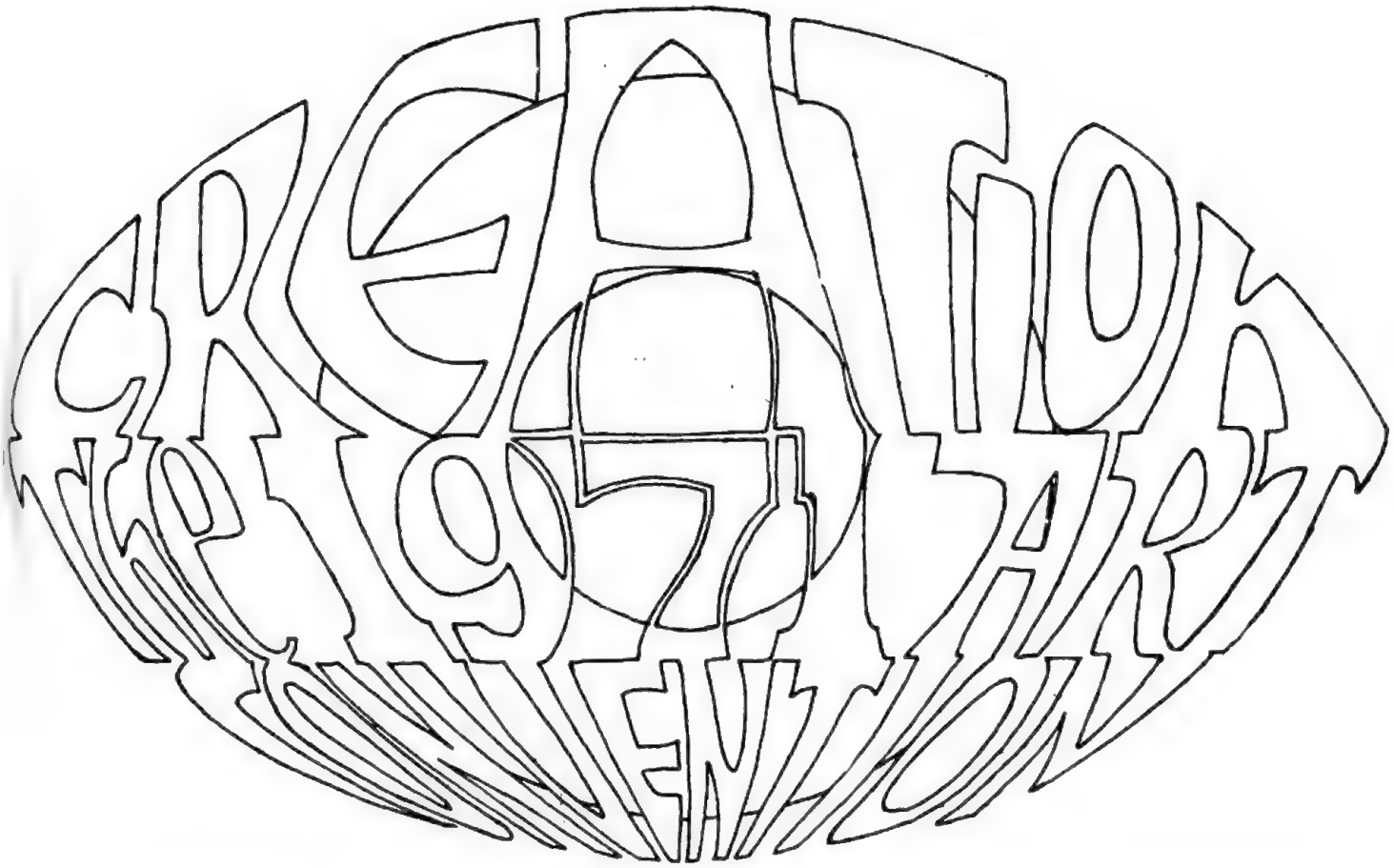
BRUNNER
PORTFOLIO

BERNNER '72

BRUNNER '72

FRANK BRUNNER
'72

BRUNNER '72



CREATION CONVENTION REPORT

By Adam Malin, Con Chairman

"My name is Steranko and I would like to welcome you to Creation—the only convention I've ever been to where the guests outnumber the attendance! People have been telling me where to go for years... looks like I finally made it!" With those words, the first annual CREATION Thanksgivingcon was launched. Never have I been to a convention where more elements were in constant conflict, in more of a flux. Yet, despite inadequate organization and a slightly neo convention chairman, CREATION scored as one of the greatest first time for a convention of its kind—ever! For this reason, I decided to review the con for Infinity, and also because Gary hated it! (just joking, I'd be dead if not for his help there).

I got into the New Yorker on Friday morning, and found my entire staff, with the exception of Gary and Neal S. Pozner, waiting for me anxiously ("Aw shit, he showed up!"). After Liam O'Connor, head of staff security, finished roughing me up, I marched into the ballroom foyer, which was to be the rest lounge. With me, came 16 heavy boxes of assorted program booklets, Frazzetta/Williamson prints, Bruce Hershenson Nice Guy award buttons, and so on. I was stupified to find Gary buried under that mess. 'oh' I said, 'What's this doing along, I didn't take it.' About noon, Neal had arrived along with the Sy Barry fan club (personal joke), and we cut out for lunch at Deli City across the street.

Real exciting so far, right gang?

Okay, so next morning, with everything all set, I awoke to the sound of Gary Groth whistling into my receiver, if you want to call 3:30 AM the morning. Gary repeated this tactic the next night, and all I can say is, watch yourself, Gar, your jealousy is showing! (incidentally, Gary pulls off a very good con every August in Washington, the MetroCon.) Anyway, downstairs I went, to find a huge waiting line of 2 people. And they were from hotel security!!

8:00 AM, with dreary eyelids, I began the final check. The dealers were already pouring in like molasses, but I might note that we had a total of 75 dealer tables, with 10 more denied because of lack of adequate room. So you see that by dealer standards we were VERY well off. In my auditorium, I set all the lights properly, cleared out a table of cole slaw from a previous convention that had miraculously escaped detection (the rooms were spotless, other than that) with the help of a guy named Bruno, and put on the PA system. It worked like a charm—then. Okay, into my dealer room. I saw that 75% of the dealers were here, so I went into the foyer again. To my amazement, there was quite a large line outside, numbering about 100 people or so, from what I could tell. For 8:30 AM, it was a good start.

At 9:15, I was ready to start letting people in, but we held it up for 15 more minutes because several large scale dealers with a good deal of stock (Phil Seuling and Passaic notably) were still bringing in goods. Finally, though, Creation opened up and a swarm of people poured into the foyer, most going directly to the dealers room, an immense Ballroom with three giant crystal chandeliers. With them came my art display, the largest ever held at a convention (and wouldn't you expect it from an artzine publisher?!) and insured for more than $100,000.00. Included in that display would be oils by every top artist in the field, excluding Frank Frazetta and Ken Smith; Ken, because he couldn't make it, and Frank, because he didn't show, for what reason I may never know, though he had promised to. Other than them, every artist, in every mode of art, was represented, under the watchful eye of my Burns security guard. And then, two hours later, at 11:30, I got up on the podium of the auditorium, which held at that time 500 some-odd people, and announced what was to come.

"Welcome to Creation" I blurted, in a not too convincing tone. "I've got a list here of the convention's events. First off, at 11:35, Jim Steranko will deliver our opening speech." Wide applause...as always. Steranko is a brilliant artist; and I found him to be one of the nicest, amiable guys I've ever met. Evidently the audience liked him, because he got a thunderous applause at the mention of his name. "At 1:30, an interview, David Frost style, with Barry Alan Richmand, president of Montmartre and director-general of France's famed Grand Guignol Theatre." And so on. I was delighted to get a big round of applause as I left stage, or was that because Jim had just entered the room?! Anyway, he got up and started delivering THE worst and corniest jokes you could ever imagine, one liners to shame even the biggest ham of them all, Jim Warren. And as it was, Warren was the center of the Steranko attack! "I saw some guys praying to an elevator that Jim Warren was in. At least I *think* they were praying... they were carrying a big wooden cross!" Steranko gave it to everybody, including himself, and then commented on the current status of the comic book. I found him to be a strong, gifted speaker.

At about 12:00, with the Steranko Keynote Speech over, I made my way back to the dealers room, which was now bathed in people. I found that dealers were doing very well, which of course was gratifying. Gary's and my dear friends the Zuckermans, dealers from Brooklyn, finally made it in, being the latest dealers to arrive. I spoke to Phil Seuling at that point about the trials and tribulations of running a con, and believe me, if anyone knows about 'em, it's Phil. "Watch out for all the guys that want to rip you off of everything you own. That includes hotel security!" And Phil was right.

1:30. Onstage, myself and Barry Alan Richmond, discussing how the panel would proceed. "Barry, how do you want me to address you, y'know, to give the full effect of being president of Montmartre?" "I think Mr. President or Your Excellency would be okay, if it's fine by you." "Good enough...I've got a crib paper, so let's get started." Mikes were swerved in front of us, lights came on, and I began interviewing Barry better than I had ever hoped to achieve, partly I suppose because I was 100% relaxed now, though I couldn't figure out why. I asked Barry about the French Theatre, how sets and special effects were achieved, and the future of the play, and found him to be quite an articulate person. Unfortunately, we had to cut short on what I had wanted to ask him, because it was time for the no. 1 attraction of the convention—transferred from Sunday for certain reasons—to occur. I left the stage, and slowly it filled up again. Led by Mark Hanerfeld and Chip Storob, the ACBA panel was about to begin.

The assemblage of professionalism that appeared on the stage during the ACBA panel was just beyond belief. Certainly it was the largest and greatest pro panel ever held, and despite a few problems coordinating it by Chip, the panel was a smash success. So many pros were up there, that, well, just listen: Mike Kaluta, E. Nelson Bridwell, Denny O'Neill, Mark Hanerfeld, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Gerry Conway, Alan Kupperberg, Roy Thomas, Alan Weiss, Billy Graham, Neal Adams, Berni Wrightson, Larry Ivie, and so forth. Although the panel was a success, there were troubles. The microphone finally started kicking up, going on and off at random, causing a great deal of trouble in speaking. However, the overall opinion was that the panel was a good deal of fun. It was now 5:00: time for the "Steranko Hour".

Steranko's panel lasted an hour and even a little more, but seemed only to be a continuation of the Keynote speech. Jim answered hundreds of questions, most from what I understand quite pitiful and along the lines of "Whatever happened to Talon" and such crap. Still, he carried it off with grace and dignity, and my only regret was that the magic show we had planned for so long had to come to so abrupt an end at the hands of time and money. As he finished, I checked my watch, and it read 6:15—time for the auction.

Jim Steranko
Keynote Speech

If ever there was an incompetent auctioneer born, it must be myself. I got up there during the auction, expecting to sound like Monty Hall and sounding like Joe Garagiola instead. The oddest stuff was on auction—oils by Morris Scott Dollens (beautiful, every one, in fact, one is printed in Infinity 4, of Venus); a lazar blaster (which I now happen to own, though for how long I don't know...the thing spooks me!); Action 1 for a minimum bid of $300 or so, and so forth. The auction was a real bummer, from start to finish, and as I left stage, I said, "Godamnit, where's Al Shuster?" Al had been a successful auctioneer at several cons and I thought he'd do good at the next day's Cancer Care auction. "Al, will ya?" "Yeh, sure, why not." I also talked to him about printing, and resultant—he published Infinity 4! Though of course at this time I haven't seen the result, I'm sure Al will do a splendid job. But now I'm digressing.

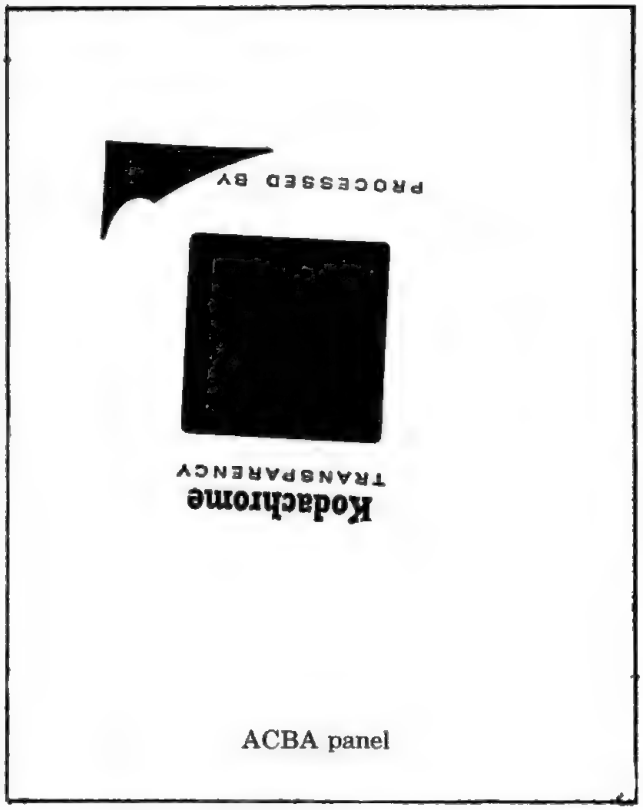
After getting 4 hamburgers, a bag of french fries and a grimy cup of grape drink from the ever present Deli City across the street, I went back to the dealers room. At that moment, hotel security came in to see how I was doing. Quick as a flash, I was at the dealer room's mike yelling "Meatball Alert, Jake!!" It seems the hotel wouldn't allow us to sell drinks or food in the convention because it would take away from their own business. Anyway, one of my dealers, Jake Jenkins, had already bought about a trillion gallons of soda and bags of potato chips, so I was forced to conceive a desperate, but practically infallible plan. As it turned out, it didn't fail, thank god! When the hotel men would come in the convention area, either myself or one of the members of the staff would immediately get to the microphone and shout "Meatball Alert!" This was an immediate signal to Jake that he should hide his "wares". As he was seated next to Joe Brancatelli's table, he quickly covered the table with Comic Fandom Monthlys, effectively hiding the evidence. With one crisis off my mind, I was to face an even greater one just hours later. With the movieshow.

CREATION

Jeff Glass, my third in charge after Gary, had gotten us what he called "one of the finest movie projectors I've ever seen!" At 8:00, I closed the dealer room, and this worked very well, taking only 20 minutes for everything. Then Jeff and I began the filmshow, starting with Richard Corben's incredible animated spectacular, "Neverwhere". After this, I went upstairs with Gary, so totally drained and exhausted that I just had to lie down somewhere. About an hour later, at 9:30, the phone rang. "Must be Groth again." Gary said but nope, no such luck; it was Jeff! "Listen, we got troubles, the projector just broke down!!" "What in hell do you mean, broke down???" "You gotta come down here, the people are screaming bloody murder, shouting for the King!" Naturally, I did what anyone would have done — I stayed in my room! Actually, we did indeed cancel the big scale movies that night, and show the silents we had, including some movie on Robin Hood, better left undescribed.

So ended the first day of Creation. But the worst was yet to come!!

"Yeah...yeh, I hear you, operator. 7:00 AM, yes, thank you." "Snoreeee!" Eventually, through some minor miracle, I got up, fell out of bed, dragged a comb across my head, found my way downstairs and blah blah. The place was in an absolute mess. "Hello, operator, get me banquets...yeah, is Bruno there?...Bruno? Hi, this is Adam...listen, get some guys together and clean this place up, it's a damn mess." So they did just that, and also confiscated, among other things, $5 out of Phil Seuling's petty cash box, a copy of Imagination 1, and (get this) Myron Moose Funnies 1! At 9:00, as most of the dealers had gotten back in, we let in the crowd. Quite a few people were there right away. First off, I went upstairs to check out my art display and see how my security guard was faring. He seemed to be doing okay, and we set out yet another batch of art, including props from Star Trek and Day the Earth Stood Still, courtesy of Alan Asherman. After checking on that, I went downstairs, and want over the day's events. First thing to do was show the movies we couldn't show last night, so we did just that, including This Island Earth (in full, glorious color!), and some of Alan Asherman's shorts, including quite a bit of Star Trek Blooper reels. These all proved an enjoyable treat, and then, about 12:30 or so, if memory serves me right, we began the second auction.



ACBA panel

The biggest sellers there were posters donated by Howard Bayliss to the Cancer Care fund. As it was, we only collected a total of $30 for the fund, a pittance more insulting than rewarding. But Al handled the auction like a real expert, and by 1:30 we were ready for the big film event—a print of Fritz Lang's incomparable "Metropolis!"

Bruce Jones was the moderator for this filmshow, which started off with lots of old sound cartoons of Tweety Bird, Bugs Bunny, and such, which gave everybody a big kick, as well as some of Alan Asherman's trailers, including some great scenes from Fantasia. Then, Metropolis was shown, and though the print was a bit scratchy, was that movie incredible!! After that, I ducked out to check on everything, which for once was fine. Coming back in, I got set for the biggest gamble I was taking the whole convention—showing a movie called "Those Fabulous Furry Freak Bros. Acquire A Groupie", based on the Gilbert Shelton comic strip. There were about 2 minutes of sex in this, and I was worried about the legal aspects of showing it in relative public. As I had repeatedly warned the audience what to expect, nobody complained and the movie was enjoyed by all, because it was quite funny.

Afterwards, we went out for some air (and I assure you, in NYC that means staying indoors!), but soon returned, Alan Hologua and I were scheduled for the EC Slideshow at about 4 PM or so. That went off without a hitch, as each of us recalled some anecdote about EC as we showed the beautiful slides, featuring close to 100 slides of EC covers and comics. Wow! Now, at 5 PM, it was time for the last panel of the convention—the Web Of Horror panel.

Although the guys (Berni Wrightson, Alan Weiss, Frank Brunner, Mike Kaluta, Howie Chaykin, Marv Wolfman, and Bruce Jones) told a lot of secrets and such, somehow this panel seemed the poorest of the con, and for me this was a letdown because it was the very first idea I had had for a panel and I had considered it a good one. Ah well, you win some, you lose some. Frank Brunner, who incidentally showed up a little late, dug up the winning artist in Web's fan art contest, and showed it to the audience. They of course oohed and aahed, and afterwards the pros sat around giving sketches to the fans.

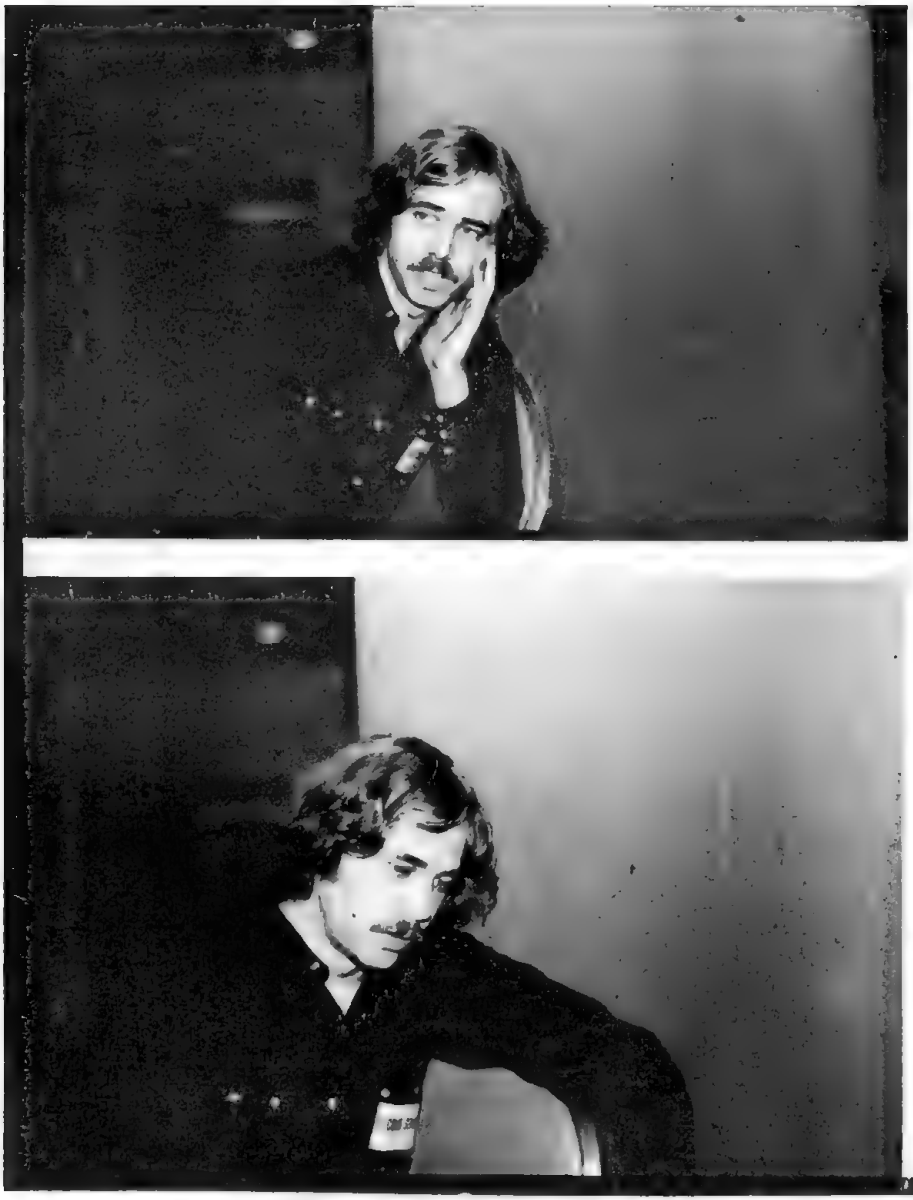
At 8:00 the dealers room cleared for the last time, and from what I had heard, general dealer profit was unusually high. Some notable exceptions to this were Todd Kessler and Nancy Warner, but for those two, I believe everyone walked away much richer. Terry Stroud told me he took in $1600, and we ourselves made $400, which incidentally was the average, as I later figured out. Meanwhile, we had our second filmshow, with some more shorts, "This Island Earth," for those who missed it, and our final presentation, HG Well's "Things To Come", which was a really marvelous film.

And so it ended, Creation '71.

I suppose here would be a good place to thank the many who became involved in helping me complete the project, notably my parents and Gary's, without whom there would probably have been no Creation. Now sit back and enjoy the photos, and if you were at Creation think back.

Remember it? Goooood!

The End



MIKE W.

KALUTA

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL KALUTA

WHERE DID YOU FIRST HAVE ARTWORK PUBLISHED PROFESSIONALLY?
Gothic Blimp Works; the stuff that REALITY reprinted.

YOU MEAN "Time Lapse"?
No, the other one..."Artificial Limbs".

WHAT KIND OF FORMAL TRAINING DID YOU HAVE, IF ANY?
Ah, there's one. I went to school, Richmond Professional Institute; took fine art there.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE AN ARTIST IN THE FIRST PLACE?
John Nagy, no doubt about it, the T.V. show.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?
Sure, that's what started the whole business; John Nagy and Roy Krenkel. Nagy came first and Krenkel second. I started buying all his books, and I started drawing like Roy Krenkel, or tried to. That's how I started drawing.

WHEN YOU GOT INTO THE CITY DID YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING INFLUENCED BY THE CLIQUE OF ARTISTS AROUND YOU? OR DID YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALOOF?
No, I don't know. I groveled for a buck when I got into the city. And whatever happened because I was groveling for a buck.

DID THE OTHER ARTISTS HELP YOU WITH JOBS?
I was helping them on jobs. I didn't help Jeff (Jones).

LIKE IN THE SWAMP-THING BERNI DID?
That was way later. In the "early" days I helped out because Berni realized that I could use the work.

DID YOU DO ANYTHING FOR "NIGHTMASTER"?
Sure, Harper and I did work for that. Jeff, too. Berni did the major part of it.

YOU DIDN'T FIND ANY INFLUENCE AT ALL?
I did. I was influenced by everyone I saw.

SO, YOUR ARTWORK CHANGED BECAUSE YOU CAME TO THE CITY AND BECAUSE ALL THESE GUYS WERE AROUND YOU?
That's one aspect of it. The other thing was that I was growing older and I was seeing more. But, you can't deny the fact that when there are other people around drawing that you want to draw "better" than them. "Better" is a relative term. You can't draw better than someone else, except for a certain standard. If you like Marvel, John Romita draws better than Neal Adams. If someone likes Neal Adams, he draws better than God. That's the only way you can rate these things as far as "better" goes. You get better when people impress you, because you work harder to impress them.

WAS IT COMPETITION THAT WAS THE IMPETUS TO IMPROVE?
Sure, if it wasn't for competition, I would probably draw like Jessie Marsh.

WHAT'S IT LIKE LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY?
It's fun.

DO YOU FEEL EXPOSED TO THE CRIME PROBLEM?
Yeah, sure.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY ENCOUNTERS WITH CRIME?
I bumped into a woman who was lying on the ground and had her head bashed in. I tried to get a policeman, that was rough, but I got a cop there. Haven't been mugged or anything.

IN ALL YOUR STRIPS, WOMEN SEEM TO BE USED AS OBJECTS, USUALLY AS BACKGROUND RATHER THAN MAJOR CHARACTERS.
That's not true. Give me some examples where they are used as objects.

GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES WHERE THEY AREN'T.
"The Gardener": Andromeda's the main character. "Among the Scarabiadie": two women, the only characters except for bugs. "Hey Buddy, Can you Lend me A Dime?" Come on, you give me some examples where they're used as background. Then ask me why I'm so defensive about this.

WHY ARE YOU BEING SO DEFENSIVE ABOUT THIS?
Because I use them as background (said tongue-in-cheek)! Women are beautiful, no doubt about it. And because they are, I use them in strips.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE DOING THE MOST... FAIRY TALES, SCIENCE FICTION, OR WHAT?
Goofing off!

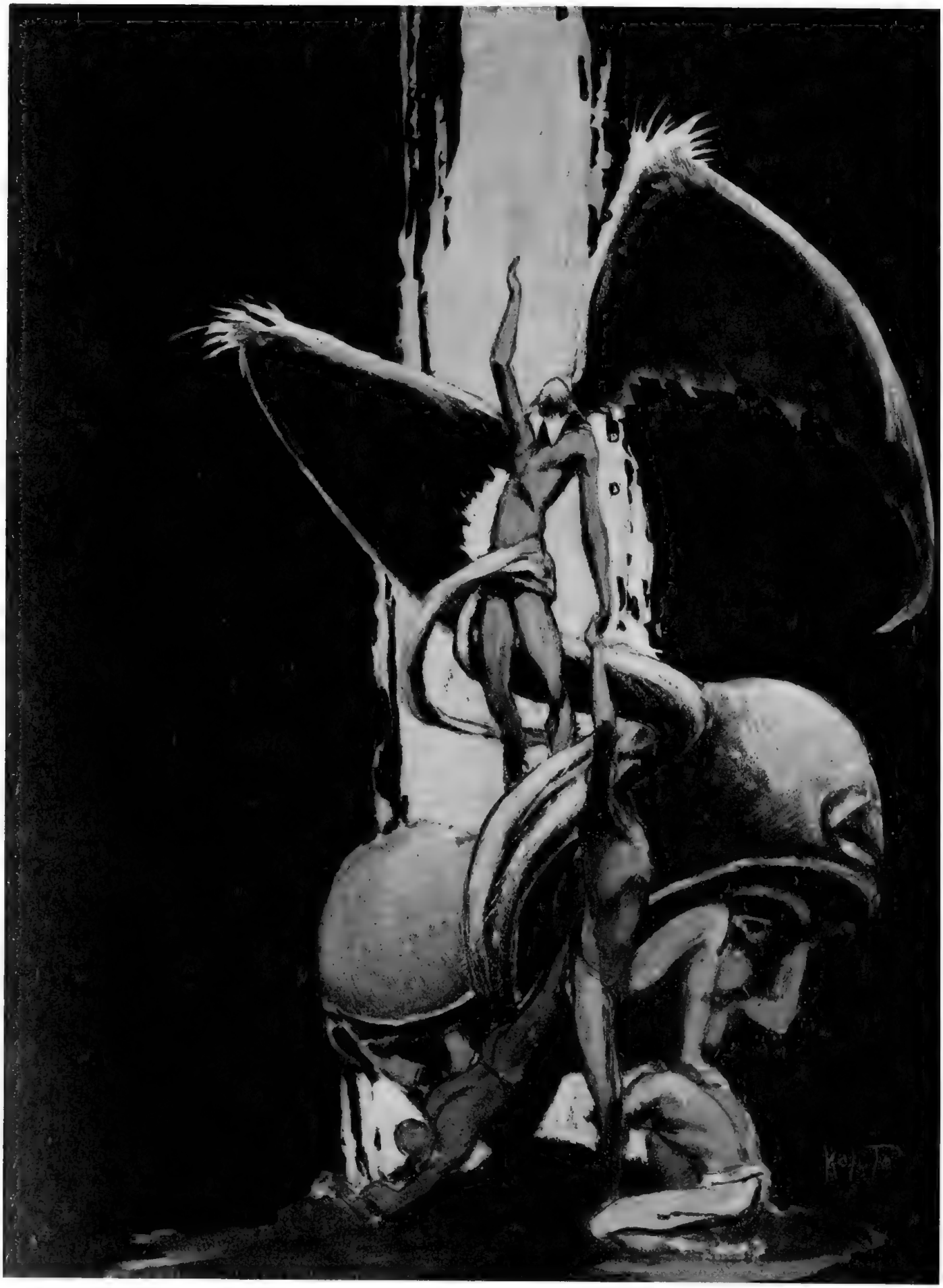
LET ME PUT IT DIFFERENTLY; IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO MAKE A LIVING, WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO DO? ((Laughter))...BESIDES THAT.
I would draw. I would stop for a long time; once I had a lot of money. I would stop only until I realized there was no strain on me; that I could do what I wanted to do, then I would just draw. But that would be bad, because then there would be no impetus to progress.

WITH YOUR MYSTERY STORIES AND OF THE OTHER STUFF YOU KNOCKED AROUND FOR NATIONAL AND THE FANZINES—IF YOU HAD THE CHOICE WHICH WRITER WOULD YOU LIKE TO ILLUSTRATE?
A comic writer?

LET'S TAKE IT BOTH WAYS: A COMIC WRITER, AND WHATEVER.
In comics, it's kind of difficult. I don't really choose the stories. They're shown to me and I like them or I dislike them. I generally take a story that's shown to me, because the editor has something in there that he thinks I can do well. I've had a lot of good luck with John Albino's work. He has a nice way of telling a story: soft 'n gentle. He's not really grizzly. He's got a lot of pathos. As for Science Fiction, I'd like to do Harry Harrison. I'd like to do some of Hamilton's Captain Future stuff, because it was so space opera.

HOW ABOUT EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS?
I'm doing that already. I'm enjoying it! We're not really doing pure Burrough's, because of his dialogue and description: too many words for comics. Len Wein is boiling it down and adding his own things and we're making it into a comic book. There are going to be purists that won't like National's Burrough's stuff because it isn't solid Burroughs. But its more Burroughs' than Marvel's CONAN is Howard's. Much more Burroughs.

I KNOW YOU ARE DOING SOME BATMAN COV-



ERS: HOW ABOUT A BATMAN STORY IN THE FUTURE?
They want me to do stories up in National, but I can't handle the characters like some of the dudes now. I'm not much into the super-heroes types. Batman's okeh as far as covers go, because you can pull a Will Eisner on them... it's fun!

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE WAY LEN IS HANDLING KORAK? IS HE TRANSPOSING IT WELL?
I can't tell you because I haven't read it yet. I've seen some of the artwork, but I haven't read the storyline yet. I can tell you the Pellucidar job, which Alan Weiss is handling, and Carson of Venus, which I'm doing: Len's doing a good job. He's sticking closer to Burroughs' things than the Tarzan books, which are edited by Joe Kubert. I think those are written mostly by Joe and Marv Wolfman. They are taking the liberty with the characters and the stories. Len has found he can work within Burroughs' framework as long as the framework can hold up, he'll stick to it. He's cut corners already on both Pellucidar and Venus, but it doesn't seem to get into the way of bringing across the flavor. I think Tarzan's being done excellently. I've seen two and a half whole books by Kubert and it is exceptional work; beautiful.

IT'S ALL KUBERT? DOES IT LOOK LIKE TOR?
No, it looks like Tarzan.

HAVE YOU SEEN TOR?
Well, I've seen Tor. Tor was blank: spacey panels, design panels. The design in Tarzan is excellent, but Joe has also added a lot of jungle, which would have been blank in Tor. He's doing things that look like he's been wanting to do for a long, long time. He's not hacking it at all; beautiful jobs... intimidating jobs is what they are.

DO YOU FIND YOUR LAYOUT INFLUENCED BY MOVIES OR CINEMATOGRAPHY? THE WAY STERANKO MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY A POINT OF VIEW SHOT. DO YOU EVER FIND ANY OF THAT SEEPING INTO YOUR WORK?
Not a seeping into, a gleening from. When you say seeping in, you make it sound like its bad to do it; it's great to do it.

DO YOU THINK YOU ACHIEVE IT?
I don't know. I don't do anything like Steranko does it. For example, Steranko will do a sequence shot where there are one, two, three, four, five things happening in small panels. The only time I've done any thing like that was when I was working from Rich Buckler's layouts for a story that hasn't seen print for Skywald. I was a little pissed off at having to work from layouts, but if I hadn't, the job wouldn't have been that good. I'm sure of that, looking back at it now, but at the time I wanted to do it myself.

DO YOU LIKE WORKING WITH SMALL PANELS OR WHAT?
Now, it doesn't matter. I used to like large panels, and I liked medium distance shots and distance shots; I didn't have many closeups. Now, I'm doing more closeups because it shows the expressions of the characters. And, it's fun.

DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS AN ILLUSTRATOR RATHER THAN A COMIC ARTIST?
I like to think of myself as an illustrator, but there are so many illustrators that are so good that I can't approach yet; I'm kind of nervous saying I'm an illustrator. I like to draw... I guess that's what it boils down to.

HOW MANY HOURS A DAY DO YOU PUT IN?
I don't keep a steady schedule. I draw at night, dead at night: 10 P.M. to 6 A.M.

WHAT FANZINES DO YOU ENJOY?
If there's one, I could narrow it down to 'Promenthean Enterprises". It's a masterwork, it's out of the ordinary. It's not Marty Greim drawing Flash Gordon and some other dude drawing the Hulk; it's individuals drawing individual works. It's more of a fine art approach to having a good time.

WHAT'S YOUR FEELING TOWARDS EC's?
I like both the writing and the drawing. It's been talked about, I don't profess to know all the things about comics that everyone knows. The things that I see that I like, I try to get to own. If it happens to be EC's, it is. I couldn't give you the names and numbers, but the specific jobs I know.

WOULDN'T IT BE NICE TO SEE REPRODUCTION LIKE THAT NOWADAYS?
The reproduction was good, but it was bad, too. The color would blot out all the line work. The color was exceptional; it wasn't cartoon color, it was an attempt at realistic color. I don't know if they could do that today. Back then, they used to shoot single pages at a time, today, they shoot four at a time. The pages are interspersed throughout the book, so, if one of the four pages has heavy blacks and one has greys, they are gonna shoot for the black, and the light greys are gonna drop out. If they shoot for the greys, the black is ruined.

I DON'T THINK THAT YOU CAN FIND MUCH LINEWORK LIKE THE EC's TODAY. DO YOU THINK IT WAS THE BEST COMIC COMPANY?
I don't know about the best company—they made a name for themselves. They are collector's items now. They're really good work. They are the only comics I would get any one of. If someone says to me: "I have an EC comic, do you want it"?, I wouldn't say: "Which one is it". I would say: "sure"! If someone says: "I have a Marvel comic book", I would say: "I don't want it." If someone would say: "I have a National comic book," I'd say: "What kind is it; who's in it; what's happening?"

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF RUSS COCHRAN'S IDEA OF REPRINTING THE EC'S FULL-SIZED?
It's nice to see. I've got the book, it was given to me by a young lady.

WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO WORK IN THE EC FRAMEWORK?
I don't think I could have done it. I don't think I have what those guys had. They were really competent in what they were doing. I've only been working in the comics for three years, so, I couldn't make it; wouldn't make the grade. I'd be afraid to go up to the office and say: "Here's my work."

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS YOUR BEST WORK TO DATE?
There are two things: "Among the Scarabiadie" for ABYSS 2 and one other than hasn't seen print, "City of Yesterday" that I did for Rich Buckler. I did some covers that I like: one of Batman on top of an incinerator stack with a downshot—an Eisner shot—looking down at the factories—it has mood. The Carson stuff I really enjoy. There are parts of it I wish I could get back and hone them up a little, but I could just do that forever. It'll get better and better with time.

WHY DON'T YOU PAINT MORE THAN YOU DO?
Because I don't know how to use color as well as I'd like to, and I need time to paint, and I don't have time.

WHICH DO YOU PREFER: BLACK AND WHITE, OR COLOR?
I don't prefer either one. I like color; I like seeing what people can do wtih color, but I don't like what I do with color. As it is now, when I do a painting, I do a colored drawing and that's not what paints are for. Paints are to paint with. But, if I hope to get into real painting, it's gonna take a lot more discipline on my part. Right now, I'm lazy.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE "AS NIGHT FALLS" SERIES?
That was an old book uncovered by an ancient sage. It is children's stories written by children. The three pieces that are out now are all from a song cycloe called "Moonrise" . . . about a moon rising. I believe it's in Sally's song that Dreamspinner appears—he opens the book "As Night Falls" with his own set of poems and throughout the different poems he creeps back in and then he ends the book. I'm drawing these things now; they were written years ago, for girls.

HOW MANY WILL THERE BE WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED?
Hundreds.

"AND GUESS WHAT HAPPENED! ALONG CAME THAT LITTLE MOUSE THAT THE LION DIDN'T EAT AND TOOK HIS FOOT OUT OF THE TRAP.."

HOW ABOUT CONVENTIONS; THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM, RIGHT?
Right. I can't seem to find anything I want to buy, and that's one reason I come to a convention. The other reason is to see people I haven't see and that usually happens only at the July con where everyone comics —people like Frazetta and Williamson, and meeting people from the West-Coast, who come to The Big Convention, the established one.

WHEN IS ABYSS NO. 2 COMING OUT?
I don't know. I really don't know. Right now, we've got someone selling the posters for us.

DID YOU THINK ABYSS CAME UP TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS?
Sure, my part did. Berni's part did. Jeff's part did. Bruce's part did. As far as the other guys go, they weren't so hot.

WHAT ABOUT BLAST?
BLAST folded because it wasn't making money. Rotten reproductions. Those jobs were exceptional, beautiful jobs.

YOU CALL BERNI'S JOB BEAUTIFUL?
You should have seen the original.

YOU'RE SERIOUS?
I'm serious, there was tone in there, all of which dropped out.

YOU MEAN HE DID IT IN TONE AND THEY SHOT IT IN LINE?
That's right. He did it in line and tone, actually. He figured they were a sophisticated company and they could shoot it like that. They didn't. Great job, but you know what's better than that? Berni's new book, "Bad-time Stories". That is the best thing that's gonna come out in 1972.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY IN THE HUMOR LINE? DO YOU THINK NATIONAL LAMPOON HAS LEFT MAD BEHIND?
It's a completley different type magazine. Lampoon's more sophisticated.

ARE YOU GONNA DO ANY MORE STUFF FOR THEM?
Yeah, there's one thing coming out in the next issue— ten pages of "Connecticut Yankee" done in the old forties-type style, until you get to the last page. It's a fun story. It's a unit to be read. The artwork is not to be admired alone.

WHAT DO THEY PAY YOU IN RELATION TO THE COMICS?
More.

WHAT ARE YOUR TASTES IN MUSIC?
I like music. I can tell you the types I don't like: specific groups. It doesn't matter whether I don't like them or not, they are all competent musicians. They just don't effect me. I don't like Grand Funk Railroad. I don't like Chicago. I don't like Blood, Sweat, and Tears. It doesn't matter, I like good music.

I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR *THE* QUESTION — WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?
You want my plans for the future?

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS AHEAD LIKE "KALUTA STORIES"?
No, not any more, I'm just gonna keep rolling along.

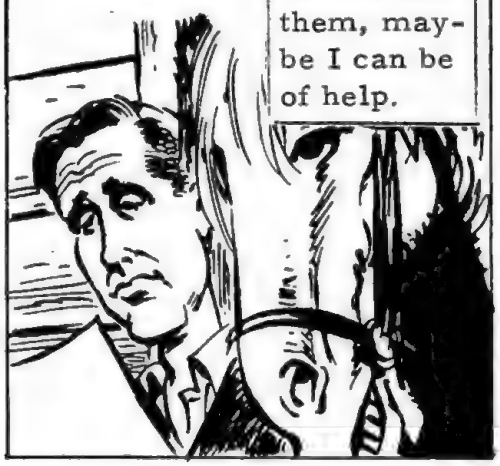
(hysterical laughter...)

With the camera of Rich Garrison, the cassette recorder of Gary Berman, and the inept questioning of Adam and Doug, Mike Kaluta was interviewed on Feb. 13, 1972. Mike is the opposite of Steve Harper in personality, which may give credence to the old "opposite" attraction idea.

MR. ODD

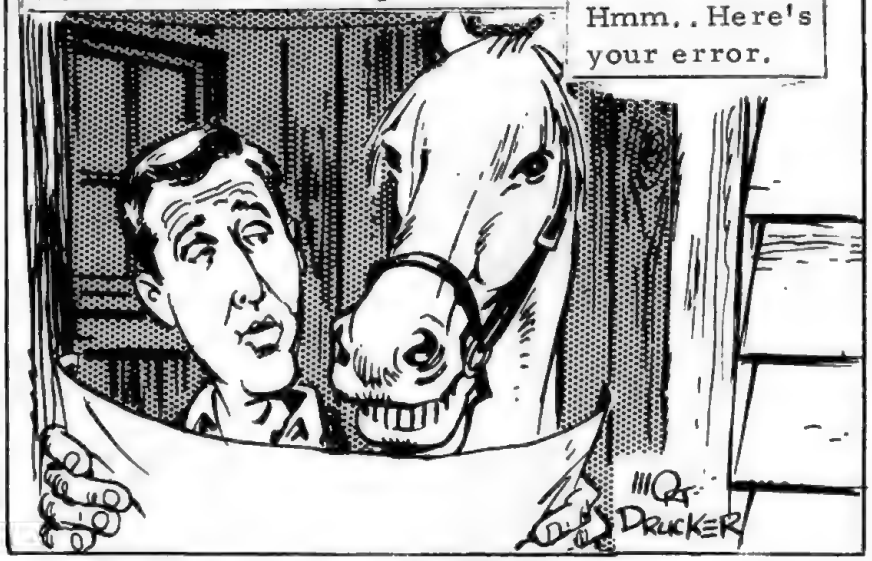
The boss is coming and I don't have the blueprints.

Let me see them, maybe I can be of help.



The boss said whoever could do this would become a vice president.

Hmm.. Here's your error.



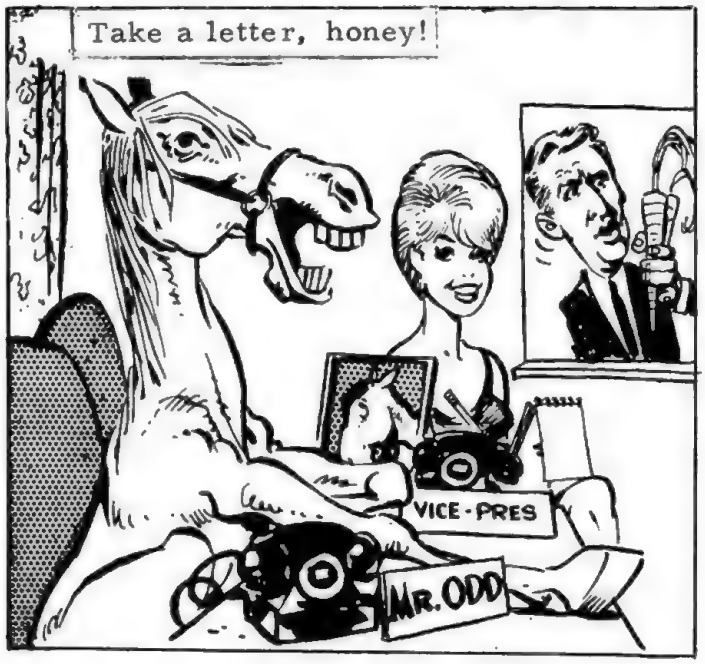
In this equation you should have $X=\frac{(63\%y+197(42-x/8x)^{z}}{x-2y+7\%/2xy-z!}$

GREAT!

It's all finished sir

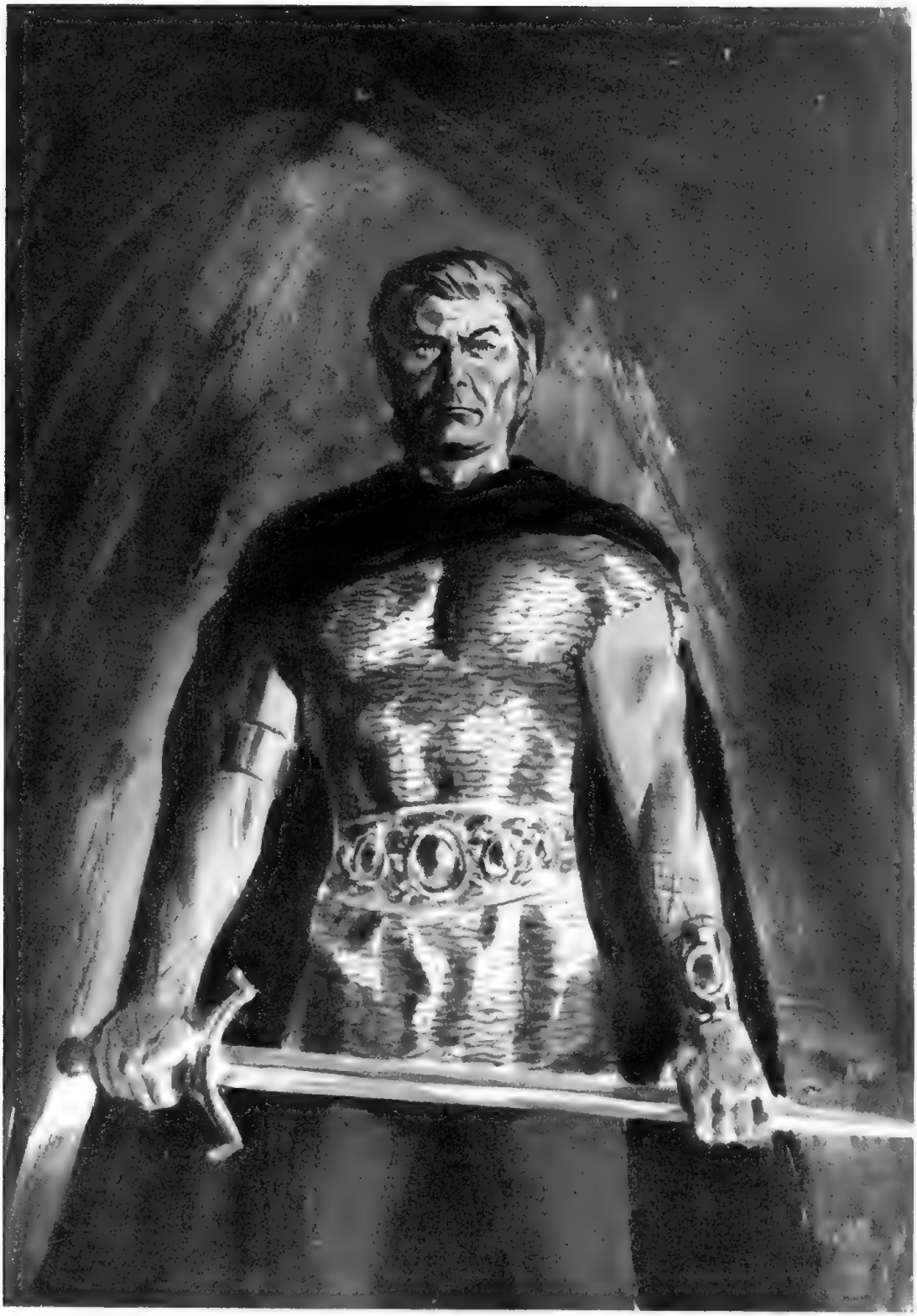
There's going to be a new vice president in the firm, and some new carrots for your friend....

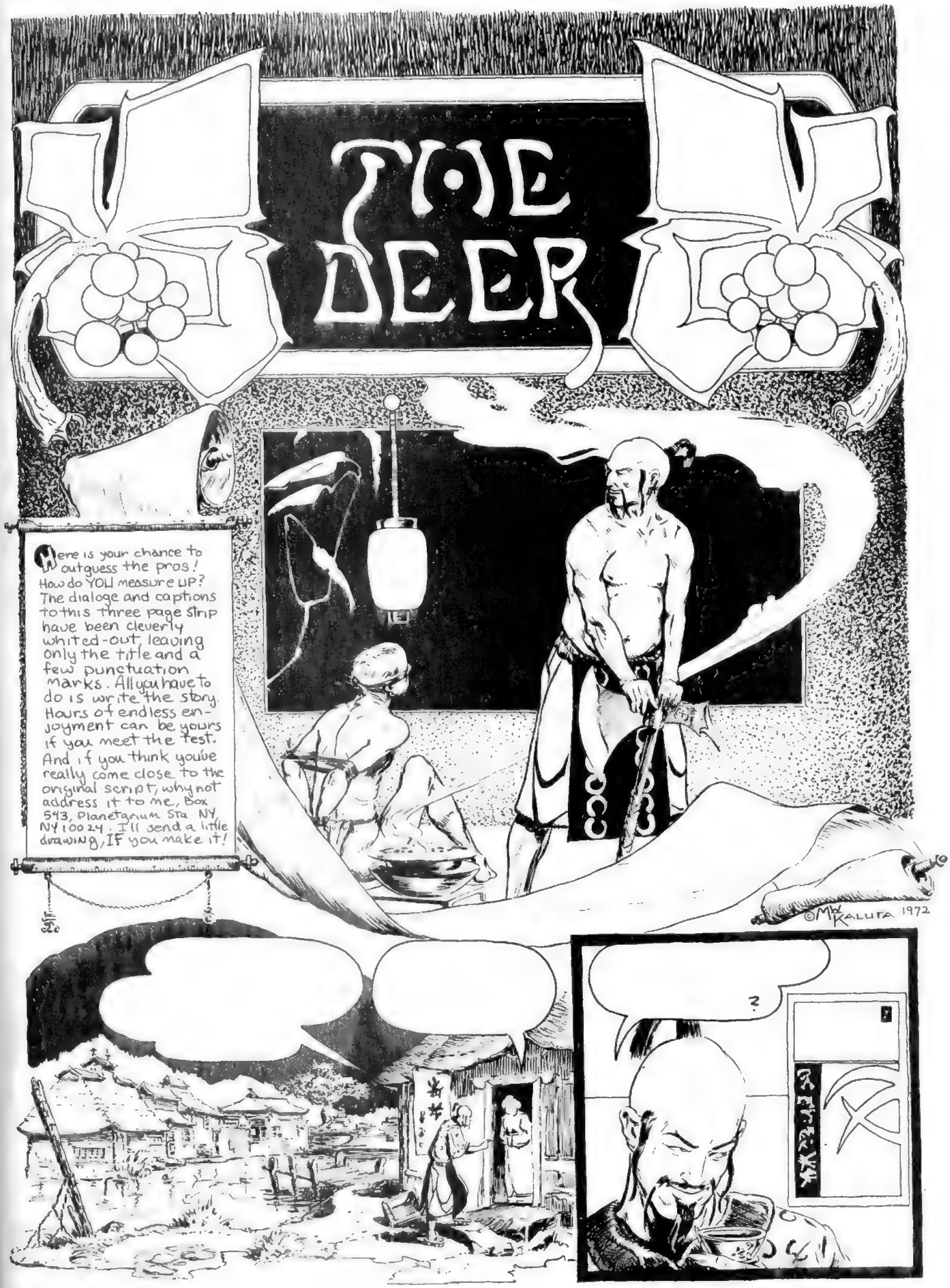
Take a letter, honey!



the artist's corner

An acrylic piece by Jeff Jones, the only one he ever did.




THE DEER
Here is your chance to outguess the pros! How do YOU measure UP? The dialoge and captions to this three page strip have been cleverly whited-out, leaving only the title and a few punctuation marks. All you have to do is write the story. Hours of endless enjoyment can be yours if you meet the test. And if you think you've really come close to the original script, why not address it to me, Box 543, Planetarium Sta NY, NY 10024. I'll send a little drawing, IF you make it!
©MW KALUTA 1972
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THE END

CLYDE
CALDWELL
'82

R.G.K.

Unpublished "Web of Horror" let

terhead logo by Berni Wrightson

S. HARPER

WILLIAMSON & FRAZETTA

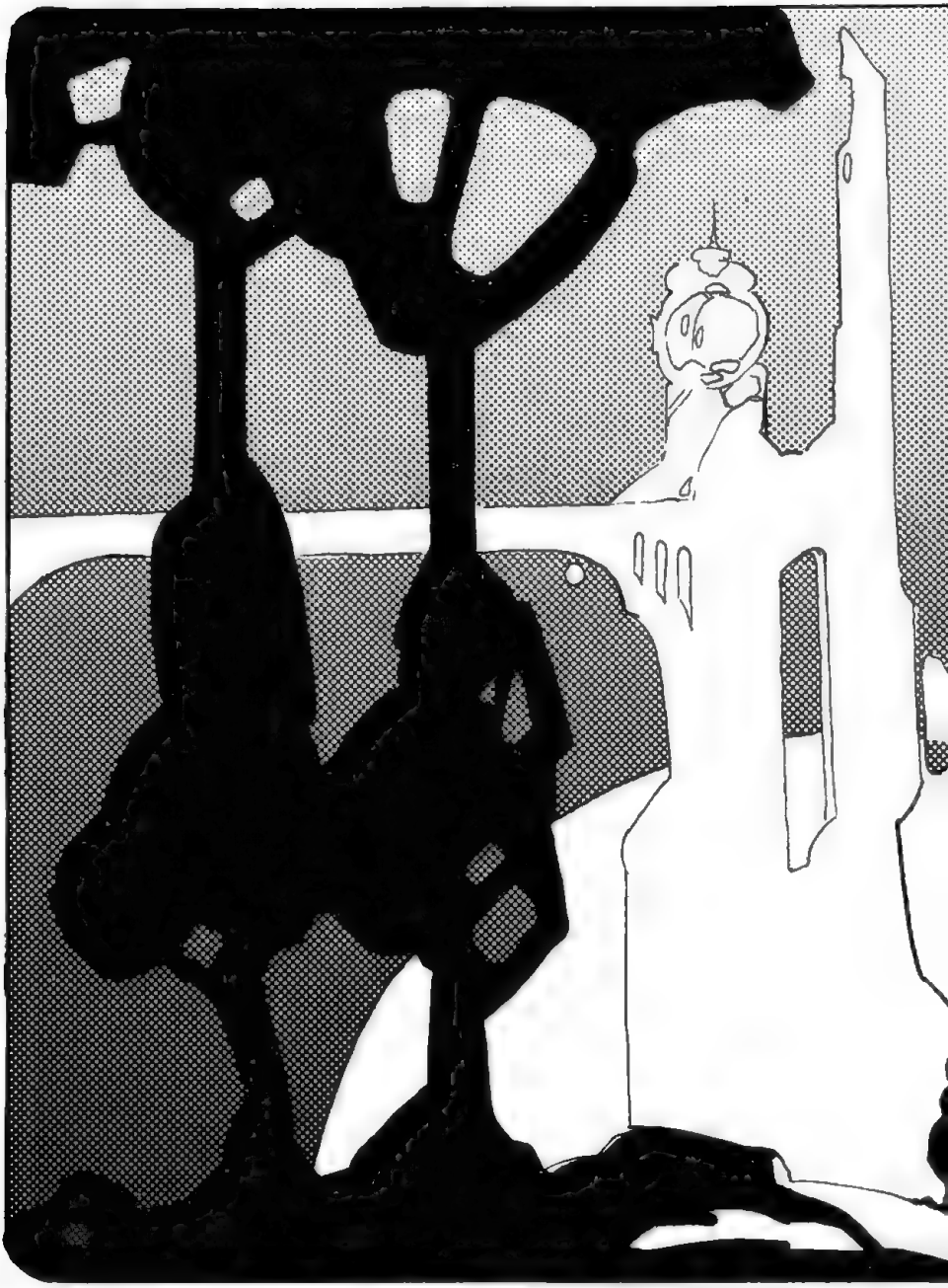
S. HARPER
71

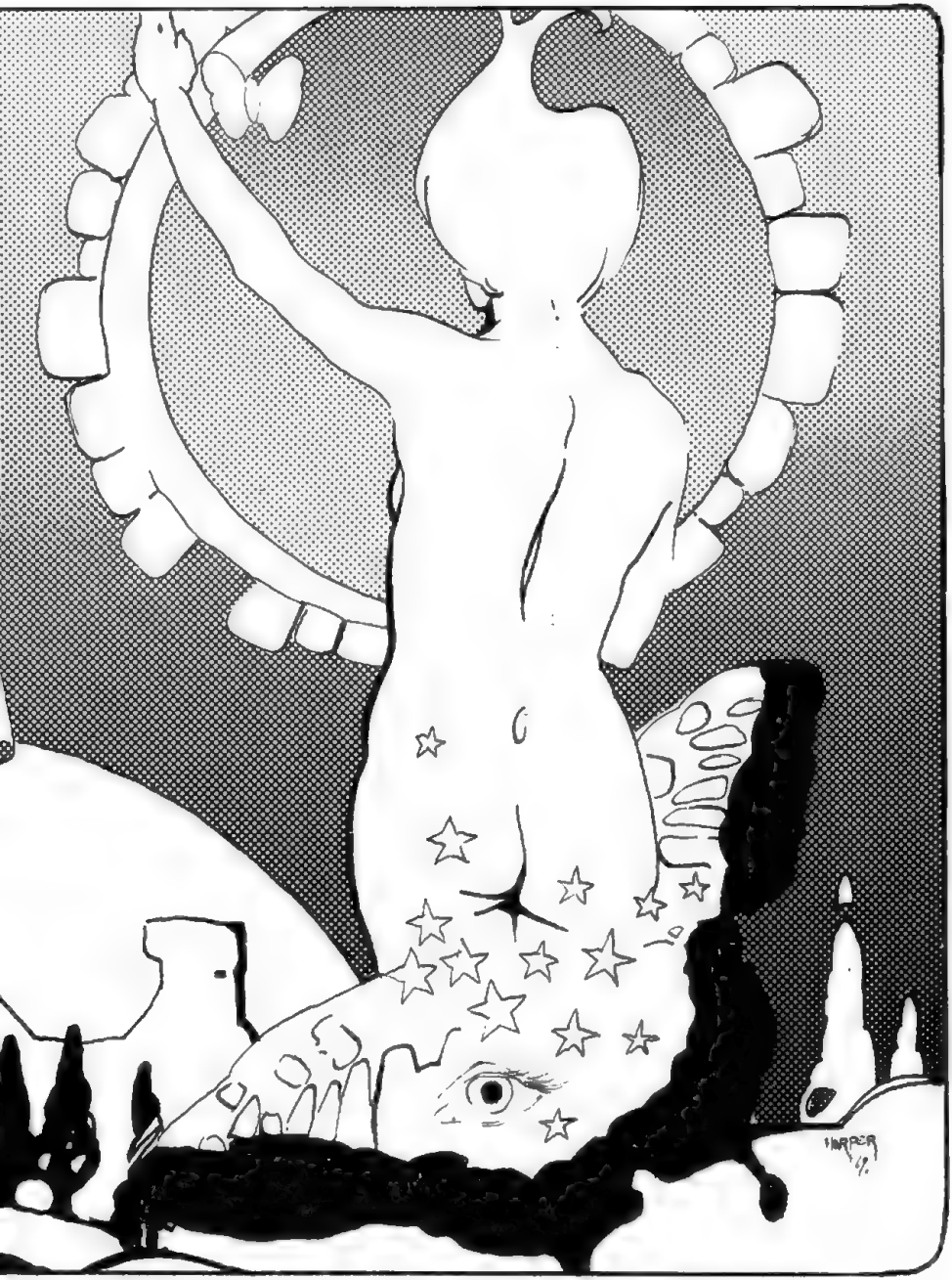
STEVE HARPER

INTERVIEW—STEVE HARPER

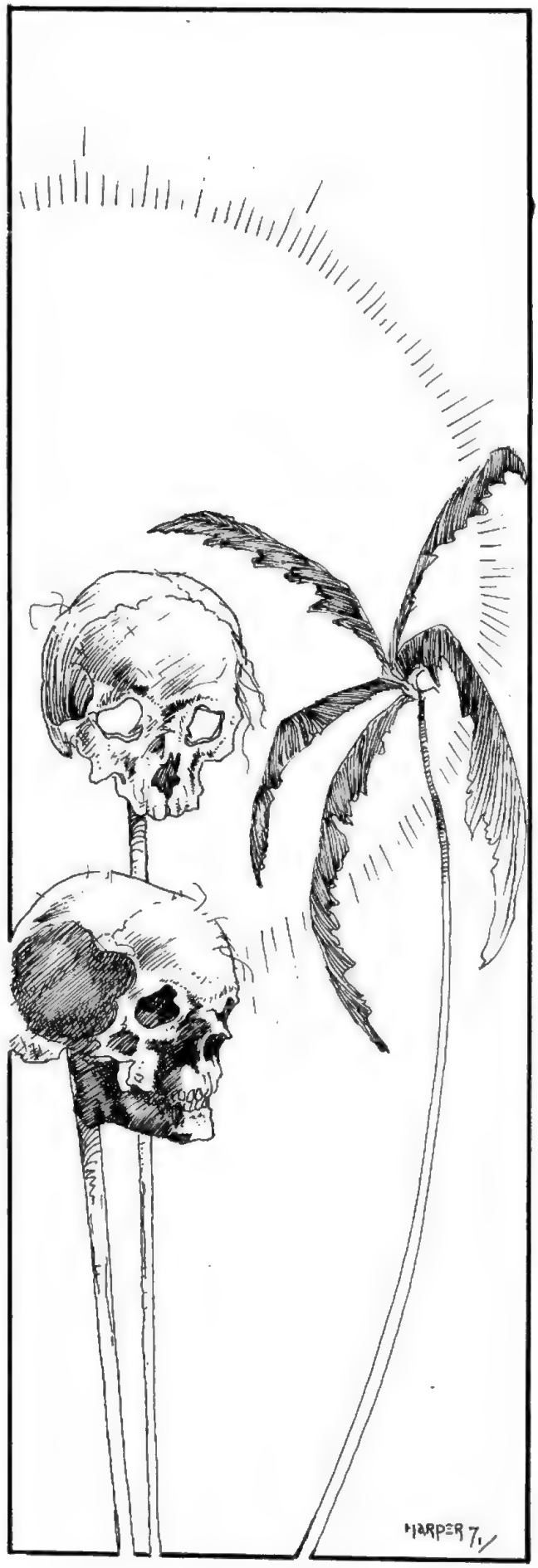
On February 13, '72, at Second Sunday in New York City, several of the Infinity staff members, along with Dave Kasakove and Mike Kaluta, interview Steve Harper, Amazing and Fantastic pulps illustrator. As we discovered, Steve is rather quiet and thoughtful, and not as open as we had hoped. Thus, we have decided to leave in the full discussion between each of us, as it may help bring Steve's personality more out into the open. We have purposely NOT edited this specific interview so that the full flavor can be brought out. Please tell us if you think this was a wise step or not. And now, the discussion.

Adam: Steve, how did you get started in fandom?
Steve: *I was never really in it.*
Adam: Then you don't consider yourself a part of it?
Steve: *No.*
Adam: Why then have you done art for fanzines like Spa Fon and Squa Tront?
Steve: *Well, I only did it because they were paying me and I needed money at the time.*
Doug: How did you get into the artwork 'bag' in the first place?
Steve: *Bag?*
Adam: Bag?
Dave: Bag?
Steve: *Oh, I guess I was looking at too many Van Gogh paintings!*
Adam: Then you're a fine-art bug, then?
Steve: *Yeah.*
Adam: Have stacks of art books up in your room.
Steve: *Stacks of 'em.*
Adam: It's a fire hazard, Y'know!
Steve: *(laughter)*
Adam: Where was your first published piece of artwork?
Dave: His third grade newspaper?
Steve: *I can't remember and I really don't want to!*
Doug: Tell us about your formal art training!
Mike: Now there's a question for ya, Steve!
Steve: *None!*
Doug: Why do you paint?
Steve: *Because I like to!*
Doug: I knew you were gonna say that, I don't know why I bothered to ask!
Steve: *I like paint and I like color; I don't paint to please other people. I just paint for myself.*
Adam: How did you get involved over at Amazing and Fantastic?
Steve: *Oh, I showed Ted White some drawings and he said he liked them, so he told me he'd send over some scripts. And I've been working for them ever since.*
Adam: How long have you been working for them?
Steve: *Perhaps a year or so.*
Doug: What are your hopes for the future?? (Laughter)
Adam: Hold it, we're not half through yet! What in hell DO you like to talk about, Steve?
Steve: *Not much!*
Doug: Which hand do you wipe your ass with, and do you make a ball or fold the toilet paper?
Steve: *Yes!*
Doug: You forget, he's been in the army for three years and look what it's done for him!
Adam: You've been in for four and look what's happened to *you!*
Mike: Why have you guys been asking him Steranko questions so far?
Adam: How can you ask Steve Harper Steranko questions?
Mike: That's what you'*ve been doing so far!
Adam: Now from what I've seen of your work in Amazing and Fantastic, it looks as if your work has been influenced by Jeff Jones.
Steve: *No, I influenced Jeff Jones. We're all decorative artists.*
Adam: Where did you get that type of style from? I sort of think back to Mucha.
Steve: *Yes, I've taken from Mucha. I take what I need and want and leave the rest behind. From the French impressionists.*
Mike: Adam, why'n'cha tell him what you think of his artwork.
Adam: I think Steve's artwork is delightful.
Steve: *Yes, I'm a great artist, but I'm still starving! They say, "your art is fine, but we can't use you, thank you!"*
Adam: Have you tried to break into comics?
Steve: *I've tried, but my art's too decorative for them.*
Adam: Decorative? In what sense?
Steve: *It's like I have to turn around and do things completely different from the normal freedom I am used to in creating my work. That inhibits me, and makes things tight and amateurish.*
Adam: How do you keep from dying of malnutrition, then?
Steve: *I sell a piece of art to a guy named* Doug *every once in a while! But other than that I'm just walking around in circles. And my stomach keeps on growling...*
Doug: Where do you get your ideas for a painting?
Steve: *I can just sit there staring at a canvas and then put a wash on it and start adding color, then take it from there.*
Doug: What do you have against toadstools?!
Steve: *Everything is fatal to me!*
Adam: What fanzines do you like?
Steve: *None. I don't pay much attention to any of them.*
Adam: What DO you pay attention to?
Steve: *I read a lot of romantic novels about Talouse-Latrec...Vincent Van Gogh. Various painters in general.*
Doug: What exactly was it that attracted you to the classical painters, especially the French Impressionists?
Steve: *I saw some colors and they dazzled my eyes and I became interested.*
Adam: What do you enjoy drawing?
Steve: *What do I enjoy? Oh, things from life, that come out spontaneously. I paint at random; it can be knives, forks, coffee cups on the table.*
Adam: Then do you do many still lifes?
Steve: *Sometimes...sometimes when I think it will be a good picture.*
Doug: What are your feelings towards the world in general?
Steve: *It doesn't seem to be working very well, does it?*
Adam: Does it seem likely that we'll all be dead soon?
Steve: *Who knows?*
Rich: Are you a pessimist or an optimist?
Steve: *Sorry, I don't know what those two words mean.*
Adam: Living where you do, have you ever been mugged...in the city?
Steve: *No.*
Doug: He was in the army, he got mugged right there!
Adam: Whereabouts were you stationed?




HARPER

Steve: *On the moon.*
Adam: Oh? That's nice.
Doug: How did the army affect your life in general?
Steve: *It turned me into a communist.*
Doug: Communist or socialist?
Steve: *"The Republic Of All".*
Adam: What, then, do you think of the US government?
Steve: *It doesn't impress* me! *There are too many stars; they're all brass.*
Adam: Are you opposed to our involvement over in Viet?
Steve: *I'm not opposed to anything, I just sorta drift around.*
Adam: What else do you do?
Steve: *I like to go over to the Museum Of Natural History and look at the old bones.*
Adam: Do you do much reading?
Steve: *I used to do a lot more than I do now.*
Mike: Why not ask him what comic illustrators he enjoys?
Adam: Mike, please. Steve, what comic illustrators do you enjoy?
Steve: *Well, I like Alex Toth...I like Graham Ingles, Will Eisner's good.*
Adam: What do you enjoy Toth for?
Steve: *For his cinerama picture technique... various views. In comics, Mike Kaluta is hard to beat at times!*
Adam: What about Berni, and Jeff's (Jones') paintings?
Steve: *Berni I like. Jeff's paintings; I don't think Jeff Jones paints like Jeff Jones. He's like too many other people that do this.*
Adam: What about his penwork?
Steve: *Jeff Jones is an excellent craftsman, but... he relies too much on other people for impressions. He's not free enough yet, which I guess is probably why he's moving to Woodstock; to give his painting a lift.*
Adam: Wouldn't you say *his* work shows the influence of the French impressionists?
Steve: *No, not so much as it should, or* could.
Adam: Did you see the painting of Sheherazade he did for Legend 2?
Steve: *Oh.*
Adam: I felt that captured the flavor of impressionism ... that is, the sort of colors and delicateness he needed.
Rich: Is he in a different vein, like, say, early American painting?
Steve: *Jeff Jones isn't a painter, he's an illustrator. Vaguely yes, but he could be* a lot *better if he painted his own things. He's just not... unhung enough, to do his own art.*
Mike: Adam, why do you think people like Jeff's work so much?
Adam: It's got flavor... one of the things I like about it is that he uses colors very well. Especially lately, he's done stuff that... has the mood of what he draws... with women, flowery—no that's a bad word. Take for instance that oil he's got up on his living room wall, y'know, of the girl with those bat wings behind her... there's a delicateness to her, that he conveys with figure and her actions. You've really got the feeling that she's feminine. You take a look at something like his "Axe To Grind" strip he did for Warren, and like, there's this girl in it, running up a stairway away from this madman, and she's trying to hold up her dress—one of those colonial ankle low jobbies) so she doesn't trip, and you look at her body, and it moves like a woman's, her fingers (pinkies) are pointing outwards, to suggest daintiness, and you really get that feeling of it.
Mike: Jeff draws too much like Bruce Jones! (just kidding.)
Steve: *Why did you print that oil rough of his on Infinity 2's back cover in black and white, didn't you like it?*
Adam: Like it, we couldn't afford it! Color separation cost too much to us then.



Mike: Do you like Brunner's color better than Jeff's?
Adam: Do you, Steve?
Steve: *No. I guess my favorite's is Frazetta, as far as his fantasy work goes.*
Adam: Color like, or not like reality?
Steve: *What is reality in paintings? Color is relative; you can paint anything anyway you want to, if you're a painter and you enjoy it and you do it.*
Adam: In terms of realism, does James Bama appear as a realistic painter?
Steve: *I haven't even bothered to consider Bama. I mean, I can look at his paintings and accept them as drawings. But his work seems to have a . . . varnish. It looks . . . subdued.*
Doug: If you could do a job for the comics, the way YOU would want to, how would you do it?
Steve: *I don't know, I suppose I'd have to have a script first. But I guess I'd get too tight. I'd have to do it in a common style, which I don't have.*
Adam: You say you don't have a common style...then what type of style DO you have?
Steve: *Basically, it's all design.*
Adam: Like just drawing.
Doug: What do you think of New York?
Steve: *It's the cesspool of the world...it's a good place to die. It's the cesspool of the world, and I fit right in.*
Adam: That's an epitaph if ever I heard one. Now why can't we have an interview like Playboy?
Mike: Looks like you aren't too pleased with the way things are going!
Adam: Steve isn't really answering, he's thinking more than he's talking!
Mike: I think that if you look between what he says and what he doesn't say, you'll find out a lot about him.
Adam: Why are you so quiet?
Doug: Word's not quiet, it's monosyllabic.
Steve: *Can I quote you on that?!*
Adam: I mean, how many people are gonna look at this and say, "Steve Harper is a thoughtful, intelligent man crushed by his surroundings"? More likely, they'll think he's partially mute!
Mike: That's because you cater to the Steranko audience.
Adam: Oh no, damn for sure we don't. We cater to an art-oriented audience.
Mike: Wanna bet?! Why are you selling here at Second Sunday, then
Gary: Truth is, we don't sell too good here, at least not in fanzines. Comics we can sell, but not too many Infinities.
Mike: Yeah, but they've gotta be into comics.
Adam: No, you miss the whole point . . . an art fan is usually an EC fan, like Jeff Jones and Frazetta paperback covers . . . that's the type of audience we hit generally. If you dig Reality, then you're a solid core art fan. If you dig Infinity, then you're an art fan that may want a bit more gab. But you're still an art fan. I agree that maybe the first issue we went out to the Steranko fan . . . no more.
Mike: I really meant the comic fan.

Adam: Yes, we're bound to get them, but mostly the comic fan who discriminates what he buys by the art inside. Getting back, Steve, what do you feel about drugs?
Steve: *Drugs are fine if you know how to use them; you can learn a hell of a lot.*
Gary: Do you think it helps the way you draw?
Steve: *Perhaps it has and perhaps it hasn't.*
Doug: Would you use drugs to get a different outlook?
Steve: *My outlook is always different. It's always changing.*
Adam: You've tried acid?
Steve: *Yes.....*
Adam: Did it affect your viewpoint; I haven't tried it myself, so I wouldn't know.
Steve: *No, it didn't.*
Mike: It affects different people different ways, from what Ive "heard".
Doug: A tissue of lies, Mike!!
Adam: What do you think of Jane Fonda?
Steve: *Fine body . . . haven't talked to her lately.*
Adam: The last time you did?
Steve: *She was still the same!*
Adam: That's nice. Tell us how your relationship with Michael William Kaluta is. (Mike snikkers)
Steve: *It's a jagged edged friendship! We only keep each other around because we appreciate each other's work.*
Adam: Do either of you ever help each other with jobs?
Steve: *One way or another, perhaps.*
Adam: Is that a physical or mental help?
Steve: *Probably both.*
Mike: Both.
Gary: If you could write one story, what would it be?
Steve: *I don't know, I can't write. Everything I do has to be spontaneous. It has to be there and then it's gone. Nothing effects the way I draw; it only requires putting the pencil on the paper and making it move.*
Adam: Are there influences on what you do spontaneously?
Steve: *There are influences, but more, a freedom and enjoyment of what I am doing at the time.*
Adam: You enjoy being an artist, then.
Steve: *Yes, I do. But I don't know what an artist is. You have to be thinking about drawing or just drawing all of the time.*
Adam: When do you work.
Steve: *When I feel like it. If I could afford to buy a canvas I'd paint all the time, but I can't . . .*
Adam: How do you live?!
Steve: *I don't! Really, by day to day.*
Adam: Would you ever think of working for Warren?
Steve: *No. Warren leaves me worms.*
Mike: There's a spicy little bit for ya!
Adam: What do you think of the Bible?
Steve: *I think it should be illustrated by cheap labor . . . handled by Jim Warren!*
Adam: If money was no object, would you publish a magazine for fandom like Phantasmagoria or Abyss?
Steve: *No, it wouldn't be like that; it'd be for a few select friends.*
Adam: You seem to be a bit paranoid . . .
Steve: *Sometimes yes, sometimes no.*
Doug: Why are you growing that beard?
Steve: *To hide behind!*
Adam: Is there anything else you'd like to bring out?
Steve: *If you print this the way it is, why not.*
Mike: I think it might be a good idea if, at the end of this thing, you put the Webster's unabridged dictionary definition of paradox.
Doug: I think enigma is better.
Adam: Thanks for your time, Steve.
Steve: *Quite alright.*
Thus ended the first interview with S. Harper, indeed an enigma, for which we define it as: a riddle; a perplexing or baffling person. And of that definition we find the instant similarities to this man.

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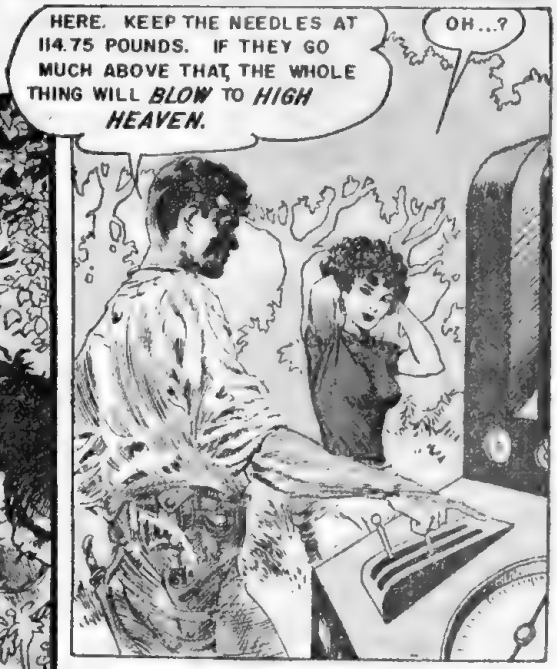
a NEW BEGINNING

THE WOMAN OPENED HER EYES. SHE LISTENED FOR A MOMENT TO THE NIGHT SOUNDS AROUND HER...TO THE BATS THAT SCREECHED AND DARTED WITH FLAPPING WINGS OVERHEAD... TO THE DISTANT TRUMPET OF A HAIRY MASTODON...TO THE BELLOWING ROAR OF A MIGHTY SABER-TOOTHED TIGER DEEP IN THE SURROUNDING JUNGLE. SHE LISTENED TO THE NIGHT SOUNDS OF THIS TROPICAL GARDEN PARADISE AROUND HER. AND THEN SHE LISTENED TO THE HUM OF THE MACHINERY...

THE WOMAN ROSE...STRETCHED ..AND MOVED ACROSS THE CLEARING TO THE BATTERY OF EQUIPMENT LINED UP AT THE EDGE OF THE OVERGROWTH. THE MAN WATCHED HER COME TO HIM, WATCHED HER LITHE BODY SWAY IN THE LIGHT FROM THE VAPOR-LAMPS...



THE WOMAN STOOD SILENTLY, STARING AT THE PULSATING NEEDLES. THE MAN TOUCHED HER...

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THE MAN HESITATED FOR A MOMENT, LOOKING DOWN AT THE WOMAN. SHE FELT HIS EYES UPON HER...FELT HER HEART SKIP IN HER CHEST...

WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT ARE YOU *LOOKING* AT?

N-NOTHING! I... I... *GOOD-NIGHT!*

THE MAN STRODE ACROSS THE CLEARING TO THE PLASTIC SLEEPING PADS. THE WOMAN SHRUGGED, TURNING TOWARD THE PANEL OF GAUGES. SHE TOUCHED AN ADJUSTING KNOB HERE, A TRIMMER TAB THERE. THE NEEDLES HELD AT 114.75 POUNDS...

THIS IS *ALL WRONG!* WE'VE *ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING!*

THE WOMAN STARED AT HER REFLECTION IN THE SHINY METAL PANEL OF THE CONTROL BOARD...

IT WILL JUST *BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN.* AND THE *RESULTS* WILL BE THE *SAME.* THE SAME *EVILS.* THE SAME...

SUDDENLY, THE WOMAN WAS NOT LOOKING AT HER REFLECTION IN THE METAL. SHE WAS LOOKING AT THE WORLD SHE AND THE MAN HAD ESCAPED FROM... THE WORLD OF 3049A.D. ...THE WORLD OF THE MACHINE... THE WORLD OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY...THE WORLD WITHOUT LOVE...

AND SHE COULD SEE HERSELF THAT MORNING IN APRIL ENTERING THE PROPOGATION BUILDING AND PASSING THE ROWS AND ROWS OF MECHANICAL INCUBATORS...

SHE COULD SEE HERSELF PASSING THE TIERED ROWS OF GAMETE BANKS WHERE THE GERM CELLS FOR MECHANICAL PROPOGATION WERE STORED...QUICK FROZEN ...UNTIL NEEDED...

AND SHE COULD SEE HERSELF DESCENDING THE STAIRS INTO THE ANCIENT CATACOMBS BENEATH THE PROPOGATION BUILDING THAT ONCE HAD BEEN USED, BUT NOW WERE LONG ABANDONED...

WHO IS IT?

IT IS I, PROFESSOR. YOU SENT FOR ME?

SHE COULD SEE THE WHITE-HAIRED OLD SCIENTIST PEERING FROM BEHIND THE STEEL DOOR TO HIS SECRET LABORATORY...
OH! COME IN! COME IN! YES, I SENT FOR YOU. I AM READY FOR YOU.
IS...IS HE HERE?
...THE OLD SCIENTIST, FLINGING WIDE THE DOOR, GESTICULATING...
YES. HE'S BEEN HERE FOR SOME TIME...
I...I'M SORRY. I COULDN'T GET HERE ANY SOONER.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT! I DIDN'T MIND WAITING!
SHE COULD SEE THE SCENE SO CLEARLY...REMEMBER THE EMBARRASSMENT SHE FELT WHEN THEY WERE INTRODUCED...
...AND NOW THAT YOU'VE MET EACH OTHER...LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.
YOU SAID IN YOUR LETTER THAT YOU COULD AFFORD US A MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM THIS WORLD, PROFESSOR.
YES! I CAN! BUT BEFORE I TELL YOU HOW I CAN ACCOMPLISH THAT, I WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU BOTH WANT TO ESCAPE...
I CAN TELL YOU WHY I WANT TO ESCAPE, PROFESSOR. BECAUSE I FIND THIS WORLD LOATHSOME AND REVOLTING. I FIND IT EVIL AND SELF-INDULGENT...
IT IS A WORLD WITHOUT LOVE... A LIFE WITHOUT MEANING. EVERYTHING IS DONE FOR US... EVERYTHING IS SUPPLIED. I WANT TO ESCAPE FROM THIS BOREDOM...THIS LETHARGY THAT BLOSSOMS FORTH IN WARS AND BLOODSHED AND EVIL...
THOSE ARE MY FEELINGS ALSO, PROFESSOR!
GOOD! GOOD!
NOW WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF I TOLD YOU I COULD SEND YOU SOMEWHERE WHERE YOU COULD BEGIN ANEW...BEGIN ALL OVER...FRESH... WITH A CLEAN SLATE...START OUR WHOLE SOCIETY AGAIN?
WHERE, PROFESSOR?
YES! WHERE?
THIS MACHINE, IT IS A TEMPORAL TRANSPORTER... A TIME MACHINE. IT COULD TAKE YOU BACK TO THE BEGINNING...TO THE ERA BEFORE CIVILIZATION...TO THE PREHISTORIC AGE...
A TIME MACHINE!
DOES THE GOVERNMENT KNOW OF THIS?

NO! I HAVE KEPT IT A SECRET. I BUILT IT BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THE SAME THINGS THAT YOU BELIEVE...
THEN YOU WILL COME BACK WITH US?
NO! I CANNOT. I AM OLD. I COULD NOT STAND THE STRAIN. BUT YOU ARE YOUNG. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE!
AND WHAT IS THAT, SIR?
GUARD THE PROPOGATION MACHINES...RUN THEM... CARE FOR THEM... UNTIL THERE ARE ENOUGH OF YOU TO BUILD MORE... UNTIL YOUR NEW SOCIETY IS STRONG...UNTIL CIVILIZATION IS REBORN!
JUST ONE THING, PROFESSOR...
SCIENCE TELLS US THAT MAN EVOLVED THROUGH EVOLUTION. IF WE GO BACK TO PREHISTORIC TIMES, WILL WE NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH PREHISTORIC MAN?
YOU MIGHT. BUT REMEMBER, YOU ARE CHANGING HISTORY.
WITH YOUR SCIENTIFIC KNOW-HOW... THE EQUIPMENT YOU BRING WITH YOU... YOU WILL BE FAR SUPERIOR THAN THEY. THROUGH ARTIFICIAL PROPOGATION, YOU WILL SOON OUT-NUMBER THEM, AND EVOLUTION WILL NO LONGER BE NECESSARY.
THEN WE OF TODAY, AND NOT PREHISTORIC MAN, WILL BE THE ANCESTORS OF EARTH'S NEW CIVILIZATION... EARTH'S CHANGED HISTORY...
EXACTLY! AND WHEN THIS ERA COMES UPON EARTH AGAIN... WHEN OUR YEAR OF 3049 RETURNS... ALL THAT EXISTS NOW WILL BE DIFFERENT. YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS WILL HAVE CORRECTED THE EVILS WE NOW FIND OFFENSIVE...
THEN WE HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO BEFORE WE CAN LEAVE. WE HAVE MUCH EQUIPMENT TO GATHER...
YES. BUT THE JOB WILL BE EASY. MUCH OF THE APPARATUS YOU WILL NEED IS RIGHT HERE, ABOVE US, IN THE PROPOGATION BUILDING. WE WILL MAKE SEVERAL TIME-PROJECTIONS... SENDING IT BACK AS WE GET IT...
TONIGHT, WHEN THE BUILDING IS CLOSED, WE CAN BEGIN...

THE WOMAN STOOD IN THE JUNGLE CLEARING, LISTENING TO THE MAN'S HEAVY BREATHING... LISTENING TO THE HUM OF THE PROPOGATION MACHINERY...
TOMORROW, WE START. TOMORROW THE FIRST FERTILIZATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE. AND WE WILL HAVE GAINED NOTHING...
THE WOMAN REMEMBERED HOW THE EQUIPMENT HAD BEEN GATHERED, SECRETLY, AND BROUGHT TO THE HIDDEN CATACOMB LABORATORY DEEP BENEATH THE PROPOGATION BUILDING, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, UNTIL...
THIS WILL BE THE LAST PROJECTION. THIS MAKES EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED.
YES, THIS COMPLETES THIS LIST...
THE WOMAN REMEMBERED HOW THE UNIT WAS PLACED ON THE TEMPORAL FORCE-FIELD PLATFORM... HOW THE PROFESSOR CAREFULLY SET THE CONTROLS...
READY...
READY...
...HOW THE LAST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT GREW HAZY... LIKE ITS PREDECESSORS...
IT'S ON ITS WAY...
...AND FINALLY VANISHED...
IT HAS ARRIVED WITH THE OTHERS.
AND NOW... WE GO...
YES. AFTER YOU ARE GONE, I WILL DESTROY THE MACHINE. OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT DISCOVER IT AND GO AFTER YOU...
THEN IT WILL BE FINAL. THERE'LL BE NO COMING BACK.
THE WOMAN REMEMBERED HOW THE OLD SCIENTIST HAD NODDED...
THAT'S RIGHT. THERE WILL BE NO COMING BACK. ARE YOU READY, MY CHILDREN?
WE ARE READY, PROFESSOR.
...HOW THEY'D STOOD UPON THE FORCE-FIELD PLATFORM AND FELT THE STRANGE SENSATION OF FADING...
GOOD-BYE! GOOD LUCK!
GOOD-BYE, PROFESSOR...
GOOD-BYE...

THE WOMAN REMEMBERED THE BLACKNESS AND THE SPINNING AND THE SUDDEN BURST OF BLINDING LIGHT...

WE'RE HERE...

PRE-HISTORIC TIMES...

THE WOMAN REMEMBERED THAT DAY THEY FIRST ARRIVED IN THE STRANGE WILD WORLD OF EARTH'S PREHISTORIC ERA...THE JUNGLE PARADISE THAT SURROUNDED THEM...

LOOK!

THE EQUIPMENT! COME! WE MUST ASSEMBLE IT...

SHE REMEMBERED THE WEEKS OF LABOR... SETTING UP THE EQUIPMENT, TESTING IT, AND FINALLY...

WE ARE *READY* TO *START* THE *PROPOGATION PROGRAM. TONIGHT,* WHILE THE *MACHINES RUN,* WE WILL *GUARD THEM IN SHIFTS...*

...SHE REMEMBERED HIS WORDS...

IN THE *MORNING,* THEY WILL BE *READY* FOR THE *FIRST FERTILIZATIONS.*

...HIS WARNING...

WE MUST *GUARD* THE *GAUGES CAREFULLY. ONE DEGREE OFF* MIGHT *DESTROY THEM...*

THE WOMAN STARED AT HERSELF IN THE CONTROL PANEL, LISTENING TO THE NIGHT SOUNDS...TO THE MAN SLEEPING ACROSS THE CLEARING...

THIS IS *WRONG!* THIS IS THE *BASIC EVIL!* A WORLD WITHOUT *LOVE* IS A *WORLD OF EVIL.* THIS METHOD OF *PROPOGATION* IS WRONG...

THE WOMAN TURNED FROM THE MACHINES...FROM THE GAUGES. SHE CROSSED THE CLEARING AND KNELT DOWN BESIDE THE MAN... TOUCHING HIM...

HUH?

I MUST *TALK* TO YOU! I MUST TRY TO *CONVINCE* YOU! THOSE *MACHINES!* THAT'S *NOT* THE WAY TO *BEGIN ANEW.* WE MUST START *NORMALLY... WITHOUT* MACHINES...

THE MAN STIRRED, SLEEPILY...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
LOVE, DARLING. WE WERE A WORLD WITHOUT LOVE. WE WERE HUMAN MACHINES IN A MACHINE WORLD. THAT WAS WHEN THE TROUBLE BEGAN! WHEN LOVE VANISHED...
THE MAN LOOKED AT THIS WOMAN KNEELING BESIDE HIM HERE IN THIS PREHISTORIC JUNGLE...
YOU MEAN...
WE WERE BORN OF MACHINES... RAISED BY MACHINES...FED... CLOTHED...ENTERTAINED BY MACHINES. WE WERE A COLD PEOPLE WITH STEELED EMOTIONS TO MATCH THE STEEL THAT SERVED US...
THE MAN LOOKED AT THIS WOMAN... AND DEEP WITHIN HIM, A SPARK BEGAN TO SMOLDER...
BUT I WAS DIFFERENT. AND YOU WERE DIFFERENT. WE WERE THROWBACKS IN AN UNEMOTIONAL WORLD. WE WANTED TO ESCAPE. BUT WHAT DID WE WANT TO ESCAPE TO?
THE SPARK BEGAN TO SMOLDER AND BURN...
WE WANTED TO ESCAPE TO NORMALCY...TO BECOME HUMAN BEINGS AGAIN...TO KNOW LOVE AGAIN...
...AND THEN, THE FLAMES BECAME A ROARING INFERNO...
YOU FEEL THAT WAY, DEAREST! I KNOW YOU DO! I'VE SEEN IT IN YOUR EYES...
YES, YES. I DO FEEL THAT WAY...
AND SUDDENLY, THE MAN AND THE WOMAN WERE IN EACH OTHERS' ARMS...
THE JUNGLE NIGHT ECHOED WITH THE DISTANT CRY OF PREHISTORIC ANIMALS. THE MACHINERY HUMMED ON. THEN, AFTER A WHILE, THERE WAS A HISSING NOISE...
WHAT'S THAT...?
GOOD LORD! THE GAUGES! WE FORGOT...

THE MACHINERY ERUPTED INTO A MILLION PIECES OF GLASS AND METAL AND TUBING AND CHEMICALS... IN ONE HUGE EAR-SHATTERING EXPLOSION...

FAR AWAY, SHAGGY-HAIRED PREHISTORIC CREATURES TURNED AS THE SOUND OF THE EXPLOSION REACHED THEIR EARS...

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN WATCHED AS THE SMOKE ROSE, DRIFTING OFF. THE MAN SHRUGGED...

THE MAN LOOKED DOWN AT THE WOMAN BESIDE HIM...

THE WOMAN TOOK THE MAN'S HAND, AND THEY STRUCK OUT INTO THE JUNGLE...

AND AS THE MAN AND THE WOMAN TRAVELED, THE PREHISTORIC CREATURES WATCHED THEM... WATCHED THE MAN NAMED *ADAM* AND THE WOMAN NAMED *EVE*...

...AND IT WAS THE INTERBREEDING OF THE DESCENDENTS OF THE *EVOLVED SPECIES* WITH THE DESCENDENTS OF THE *COUPLE* FROM *EARTH'S FUTURE* THAT PRODUCED THE *MAN OF TODAY.*-

Island Fable

FICTION:

ISLAND FABLE

by Jan Strnad

Tamara: God but she was beautiful.

I watched her from Giles' house, far from the shore, but still I could see how gracefully she moved. Her dark hair slid along her shoulder as she bent to pick a shell from the cool sands, then she brushed it back with her hand as she listened, head tilted, for the sound of waves inside. The sun was going down huge and red and watery behind her, casting her shadow my way. I watched the water that lapped in ripples at her feet, and I envied it. A poem came to mind:

'Had we but world enough, and time' I thought. But I couldn't remember the rest.

Tamara returned the shell to the sand and continued her solitary stroll. Of all the human creatures in the world, only Tamara could walk an isolated beach and not seem like an intruder.

I turned to Giles. He sat on a tall barstool and stared into his glass, swirling the half melted ice cubes that clung to the bottom. Homely, a little pudgy, that was Giles. He sat heavily, feeling the weight of his mortal body, a spiritless member of a mundane population of ordinary folk. His every movement, his very presence, had a way of reminding you that his shoes pinched, that an itch required scratching, that perhaps his stomach hurt. Not that he was repulsive or crude. He was merely...an obviously biological organism, an all-too-human human. He was also Tamara's husband.

"How long have you been here on the island?" I asked.

Giles shrugged. "Oh, I don't know. A month; maybe two."

I myself had been there . . . a week? Ten days? The island did that to a person, made him lose track of time. I can imagine children there who never age, and young men who grow old in a day. Things seemed to hang suspended there, caught in amber. And yet I remember the days like flashes of light, fast and intense; and when it was over, I remember how the real world ignored my return, as though I had been gone less than a minute.

I helped myself to more wine and sat opposite Giles at the bar, bringing the bottle with me. Giles only drank Scotch.

"How did you meet her?" I said.

Giles couldn't remember. At that time I thought it was just the Scotch that had made him forget. But now, I wonder if it wasn't something more, if maybe Giles wasn't *supposed* to know. I know I'm not making sense, but, well, let me tell you more.

"Where was she born?"

Giles didn't know. "I always assumed she was American, but she does have a kind of accent, doesn't she? Can't place it, though."

"Do you know how old she is?"

"She's never said. I guess she's in her twenties. Twenty-five?"

The wine had probably made me bolder than any polite guest has a right to be, but one more question had been nigging me for some time.

"Is she a virgin?" I asked. Giles, you see, was a eunuch. He laughed aloud.

"I wondered how long it would be before you asked me that!" he said. He stepped down from the barstool and walked over to the window where he could watch Tamara on the beach. "She almost exudes virginity, doesn't she? It's as if someone had melted down a six year old girl and poured her into the body of a grown woman—that's what she's like."

I repeated my question, but Giles didn't know the answer to that one either. He seemed to know as little about Tamara as I did, in spite of their marriage.

"Then tell me this," I said. "Do you worry about my being here like this? That I'll do the one thing with Tamara...."

"...that I could never hope to do?" He smiled a smile reserved for wise men and fools. "No, I don't worry."

Then he added: "You can always ask her."

"I may do that," I said.

I picked up a shirt for Tamara as an excuse, then left Giles and descended the carved steps that led down to the beach. The wind was beginning to blow as the island cooled, and I wished I'd thought to bring a jacket for myself. But I couldn't go back now. I hated to admit my mistakes, especially in front of Tamara.

She was using her toes to trace patterns in the wet sand. I couldn't help but be entranced by the curve of her long, brown leg as it moved back and forth carving swirls and circles into the beach. She had on white shorts, very tight, that contrasted with the sun-darkened tint of her legs and set them off all the more. They were beginning to dot themselves with goosebumps. It broke my heart to think of her belonging to that great sexless being, Giles, and I questioned the existence of justice in the world.

"It's getting kind of chilly," I said. "I brought you this." I handed her the shirt, noticing that I had inadvertently picked up one of my own, As she put it on I cursed myself for helping to cover those round, brown shoulders.

"Have you finished the book yet?" she asked.

"No, not yet," I said. Tamara's books were the only ones on the island. (Giles read magazines. I forget which ones, but they were all the same.) This particular book Tamara thought was outstanding, though I felt it was, at best, a well-written piece of foolishness. At times I felt embarrassment for the author, even at his name, which consisted of three initials and a surname. He wrote of elves, magicians, and the like, taking great pains to mold live characters out of dusty dreams, surrounding them—and himself—with a world that never existed, that never *could* exist. I discovered halfway through that it was the second part of a trilogy, but told Tamara that I'd read the first volume "a year or so ago." I hoped it wasn't a new release.

"Perhaps I'm easily impressed," she said, "but I can't help but think that he's done something phenomenal. He's built a whole world. He starts with a planet we think we know and he builds it all up new, telling us it's old beyond our remembering. And then everything becomes mythic, legendary. It isn't an easy thing to do," she said, "to create a legend."

I nodded my agreement, though I only half heard what she said. I was sure, however, that I didn't disagree with her. She fascinated me, and though I hadn't captured the sense of what she said, my eyes hadn't left her for a moment. Her lips formed each word perfectly, rounding each syllable as she gave it voice. She looked at the sand as she spoke, almost inviting me to gaze at her openly, teasing me with her shyness.

"Giles won't even pretend to read my books," she said. Why did she have to mention Giles? As if I needed reminding, or as if it would do any good.

"Do you love him?"

"Yes, very much. Why else would I marry him?"

"Of course," I said. "Why else?"

We sat down facing each other. Tamara began building small hills out of the sand. On some she traced a narrow road winding upward. I wondered if she imagined stories for those roads, making up adventures that happened along them, populating them with hand-drawn carts and trolls who rode on the backs of lizards. One by one she spread them flat with her fingers. She had long, slender fingers....

"It seems like only half a marriage," I said. "Do you miss other men?"

"At times," she said, "but not enough to make a difference."

"A difference?"

"Between you and me."

"Oh." I watched her toy with the sand for several minutes. She was too perfect for Giles, for me, for any man.

"You remind me of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty," I said, "but promised in marriage to the lame Hephaestus, ugliest of the gods."

"And you represent Ares?" she asked. "Aphrodite's lover?"

I had honestly forgotten that part of the legend, but it would have been a fruitless task to convince Tamara of that. I tried again.

"Or maybe you're more like Circe, the island sorceress who lured sailors from their ships with her beauty, then turned them to swine when they reached the shore."

I put my hand on her knee and moved closer to her. She lowered her eyes.

"No one could turn men to swine,' she said, "unless they were swine to begin with."

I drew back.

She looked at me kindly and touched my hand, lifted it from her knee. She kissed me on the forehead as she would kiss a child who had been forgiven.

"I don't think you're that kind of man," she said, "not like you pretend to be." She rose and walked down the beach. I loved her too much to follow. I sifted sand through my fingers, watching her until she disappeared around the curve of the island.

A couplet surfaced from that same hidden poem I'd thought of earlier: 'The grave's a fine and private place, But none, I think, do there embrace.' Along with it came a phrase: 'thy long preserved virginity.' I would have to look it up when I returned home.

She had said: it isn't easy to create a legend. Was that what she was, a legend in the making? Or one left behind, skipped over in the course of social evolution? A legend must have a beginning, even if it has no end. Was Tamara such a beginning? An archetype? A celestial model of myths yet to come? Or a throwback, a leftover, some ancient philosopher's unrealized dream? What would happen if she gave in to my desires? Would we be turned to salt or stone, or become trees or flowers, or would we be struck by lightning? Would she suck the soul from my body while Giles sent for the next victim? Or would it be a simple affair as between any two mortal beings?

No, not the last. Whatever it might be, it would not be the last. Though of course, it was never to be at all.

I got up and walked back up to the steps to the house. Giles was there to greet me. It occurred to me that he could have seen everything from where he stood.

"You see?" he said. "I don't worry." He smiled and handed me a drink. "Have a seat on the terrace and I'll tell you something more about her."

A person could look out over the low stone wall of the terrace onto the ocean and the beach. Giles and I pulled cloth chairs up near the wall and sat facing the water and the sun, now barely visible above the sea. Giles propped both feet up on the wall and held his glass in both hands as he talked.

"Tamara is a phenomenon," he said. "I'm convinced that there is no one quite like her anywhere in the world."

I heartily agreed with him.

"Oh she's lovely, yes," he said, "but she's something more. More even than the eternal virgin, the childlike woman. She sees things differently than we do, like she's looking not only at the present but at the ancient past as well, maybe even the distant future."

"I can't imagine her growing old," I said. "It would be the saddest thing I could imagine to watch her become wrinkled and weak, like watching a great painting flake and lose its color. I don't envy you that, Giles.

When I leave here, it's very possible that I'll never see her again, so for me she'll be exactly as she was down on the beach, in my mind, forever. But you have her mortality to contend with."

"That's something else," said Giles, "but in a way it's just what I'm saying. There's a timelessness about Tamara. Something makes her impossible to hold onto —I could almost imagine her melting into the sand or dissolving in the water or vanishing in the sunlight. She's my wife," —he looked over at me— "but she's not mine at all. Not really mine, at all."

We sat in silence for several minutes. I finished my drink and moved to get up from the chair. Giles said my name and motioned for me to wait.

"There's one more thing I want to mention," he said.

I sat back down and looked attentive. It was another few moments before Giles spoke again.

"Tamara has . . . ideas. They might even be called delusions. It's difficult to explain." He took a sip of his drink. "Tell me: do you notice anything unusual about the island? Anything . . . supernatural?"

I replied that I didn't.

"Tamara does," he said.

I could see it was difficult for Giles to talk about it. But I could also see that something was bothering him terribly, that he needed someone to confide in. I had to prompt him to continue.

"You said she had delusions."

"Oh, maybe delusions is too strong a word," he said. "But she's always mentioning, well, magical beasts and things. Never talks for long about them—just mentions them in passing. But she speaks of them as if they were real."

"Probably just some superstitions she's picked up from the islanders," I said. "She has quite an imagination, you know."

"No. It's more than that. Sometimes I get the feeling that she regards herself as some sort of goddess. Not that she's vain about her beauty, though I'm sure she's aware of it. But she just doesn't seem to fit into the scheme of things—or she fits in a way we can't comprehend." He finished his drink and got to his feet. I didn't know what to say. None of what he had told me made sense.

"I know it's crazy," he said, "but I worry about her. Or maybe I worry about myself. You see, I'm afraid of losing her. Not to you, not to any other man, but to something I don't understand. Maybe to another world entirely. And I don't know if I could give her up."

I nodded as if I understood. I said I'd do what I could.

"Just keep an eye open, if you would. I'd appreciate that. Would you like another drink?"

"No," I said. "I'll just sit here awhile longer. I'd like to think over what you've told me. I'll be in later."

Giles returned to the house, probably to bed. I thought about his story. Magical beasts? Tamara was prone to fantasy, yes, but certainly she could distinguish between the real world and the imaginary one. Perhaps, like sailors of old, she mistook manatees for mermaids; or she may have been speaking in metaphor which Giles took as literal truth. I would wait and see. For the time being I merely sat and enjoyed the view of the night sea and hoped to catch sight of Tamara returning from her solitary walk. And wondered if I was indeed in love with a lunatic.

I'm still not sure exactly what happened next. I must have dozed off, but I didn't notice it, and I don't remember waking up. But what I saw must have been a dream, for it surely couldn't have been real.

In my dream I started at a sound from the beach. Opening my eyes I saw Tamara astride a white horse that ran along the shore. Its hooves barely disturbed the sand, and it ran seemingly without effort. It bore no saddle, no bridle, no bit, no reins, but carried her along as a recognized equal with whom it was sharing an

experience.

(The next morning I remember searching the beach for hoofprints, but the tide had washed them away, had they been there at all.)

I longed, in my dreams, to share such an experience with her. This was, I realized, a true unity; not one of the physical self—though it was a remarkably sensual one—but primarily a joining of the spirit. As the horse ran, so did Tamara feel the muscles at work in its thighs; as Tamara's hair whipped back in the wind, so did the horse's mane flow back and add to her delight.

I had seen no such animal on the island and I wondered where it hid during the day. It was a graceful, supple creaton, almost an equine counterpart to Tamara herself, but large and strong, fast. No horse I had ever seen could match it, and yet it was hardly a horse at all. For its hind legs were those of a stag and its tail was the tail of a lion; and on its forehead, glistening in the moon, there grew a single spiraled horn.

finish

MORROW

As we open our third "Viewpoint" column, we feel we should thank you for writing us on past issues and telling us how we can improve. It seems letters are a form of contribution people never tire of doing, and of course we greatly enjoy receiving them, so write us whenever you wish; if your letter was nice, rest assured it'll be printed. If it was nasty, rest assured you'll get shafted behind your back (compliments of Inanity). Seriously, we feel we have given a fair representation of our mail and would like to encourage you to feel free to write us in the future on Infinity and other matters. By the way, as if you didn't know, address your letters to either Gary or Adam. OK, now here they are, the little bastard's gems...

Dear Adam,

Received your double issue of INFINITY 3 this morning, and was delighted. It's first rate—one of the best.

The interviews were interesting and the illos showed some work—not just scraps from the bottom drawer (no pun intended). RGK's portfolio was indeed that—which is to say, more than the usual "portfolio" of one or two drawings.

I see a fanzine's purpose to be: exposure of little known but deserving artists; coverage of currents bestirring comics with emphasis on new trends; convention reports, etc., via articles by people in a position to know or interviews with the trendmakers themselves... and finally, the "Historical" aspect, i.e., articles on the past developments—E.C., etc. This latter category is to me not so important as the function of keeping abreast of where comics are headed now and why. Nonetheless, it is an important and entertaining area, and I take exception to the idea that "rough sketches" and pencil drawings preparatory to a finished, published strip of cover have no place in a fanzine. I personally find these things sometimes more exquisite than the end result, and knowing from an artist's viewpoint — how significantly they are and how reflective they are of the creative process. Were I a collector of comic art, I would not be satisfied until I had every scrap, every scribble that laid the groundwork for the finished art. Since I am not, fanzines afford me the only opportunity to see these germinating ideas. (After last issue's letter column where many complained about seeing sketches a number of our readers wrote expressing the desire to see such preliminaries. In issue three we printed an extra supplement of such pieces, this issue we have no plans to repeat this idea. The sketches to a very limited degree will appear in the magazine.—ed. note)

INFINITY 3 is well on the way to being the best in the field. You mentioned that you were thinking of doing a story on underground comics in an upcoming issue. I will be glad to offer whatever background info I can if you decide to follow thru.

Write soon and congratulations on INFINITY 3.

Regards,
Jaxon

We agree with you on your points concerning a fanzines purpose, but I think it would be virtually impossible for one magazine to cover everything you mentioned. Rather these ends can be better accomplished by specialization. For example newszines such as -273C or Etcetera cover the latest events. Spa Fon and Squa Tront spotlighted EC and did such a good job, I'll Be Damned was mainly strips, The Buyers Guide and RBCC serve as adzines. By dividing fandom through fanzine buyers fans can gain more insight in the precise section of fandom they are interested in. But on the other hand it is important to contain enough variety to attract enough readers to survive. In INFINITY we are trying to produce such a variety. Whether it's possible is hard to say, but by getting enough buyers from each of these sections we are able to improve and keep the ball rolling.

Dear Sirs—

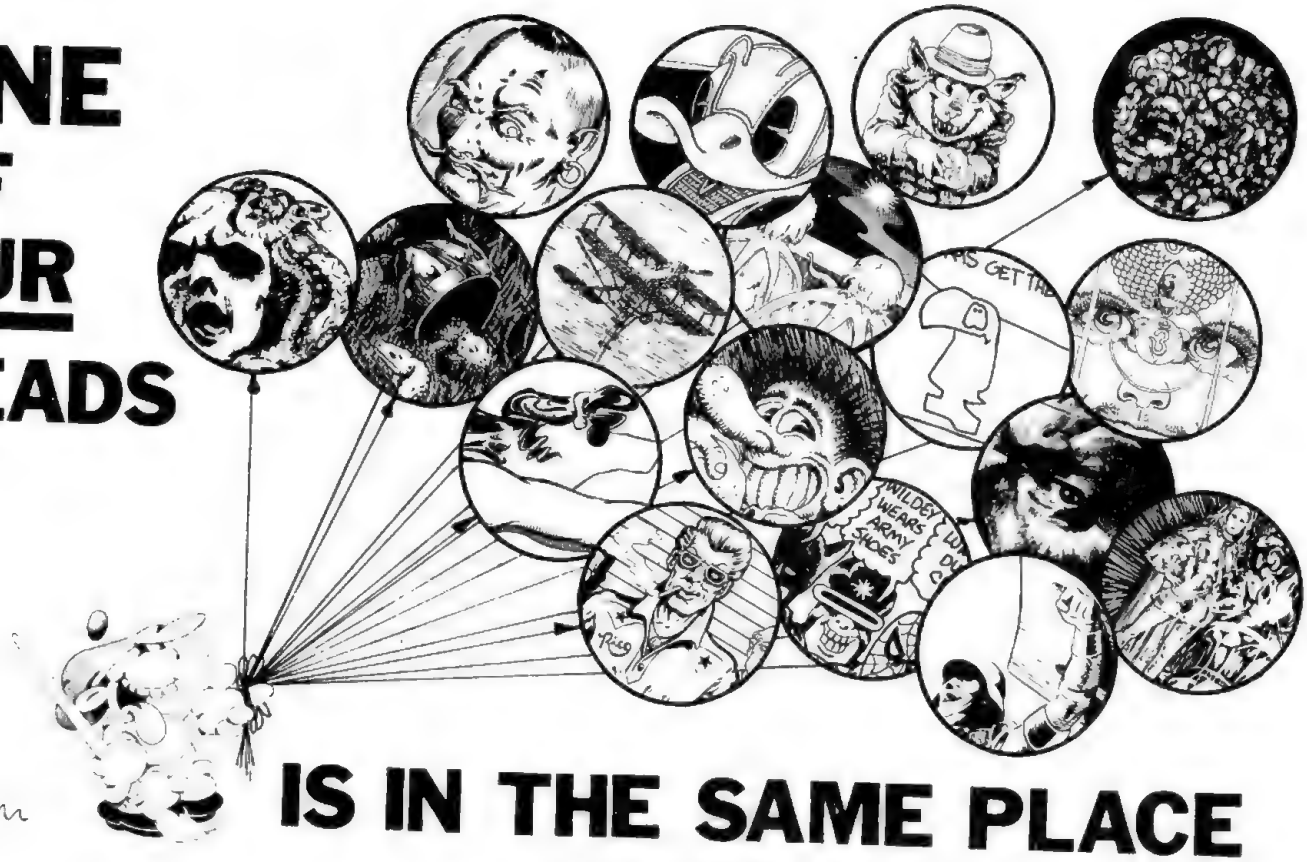
This is going to be a critical letter, so if you don't like criticism don't bother continuing—

Dear Gary,

I have just received my issues of Infinity Three and I feel compelled to respond to such a terrific effort on your part.

First, you published an *excellent* magazine; visual excitement and words of interest. The reproduction and layout were, overall, of excellent quality. The art and the artists were great. Most of all, I enjoyed the Krenkel Portfolio. The pages were full of magic. (We plan to have a few more large portfolios by a single artist in one of our future issues. This issue we have tried something different—ed. note) The interviews were informative, but interviews of this type are becoming common in fandom and the same artists are being interviewed over and over again. Although I still enjoy them, I feel that my

ONE OF OUR HEADS



IS IN THE SAME PLACE AS YOURS !

GET THEM BOTH TOGETHER WITH FANTAGRAPHICS NO. 4 !

WE'VE GOT: STRIPS BY DENNIS NOLAN, TOM BIRD, VINCE DAVIS, GEORGE METZGER, AND JOHNY CHAMBERS; ART BY BOB ZOELL, ROBERT CRUMB, KEITH KLEESPIES, JOHN FAWCETT, RICK GRIFFIN, VICTOR MOSCOSSO, BOB INWOOD, ROB BROWN, AL DAVOREN, GREG IRONS, BHOB STEWART, DOUG WILDEY, NEIL PASSEY, R.L. TUBBESING, J. OSBORNE, AND ROGER BRAND; AN ARTICLE ON CRIME COMICS BY AL DAVOREN AND PARLEY HOLMAN; SOME PAGES OF SKETCHES BY FAMED DISNEY ARTIST, ALBERT HURTER; SOME FANTASTIC PHOTOS FROM CIRCA 1920; AND, FINALLY, A CUT-OUT TOY OF "MOOSE MOUSE" AND "DARN OL' DUCK" ROCKIN' THE BOAT.

ALL OF THIS IS NEATLY PACKAGED INTO 80 PAGES OF WRAP-AROUND MAGAZINE WITH A 4-COLOR FRONT COVER. THE INTERIOR PAGES ARE ON HEAVY, 70# STOCK. THE 4-COLOR COVER IS ON 10 PT. COATED STOCK (WITH TWO COATS OF VARNISH TO PREVENT SCRATCHES). THE CUT-OUT TOY IS PRINTED ON ONE SIDE OF HEAVY INDEX STOCK FOR EASE OF ASSEMBLY, AND IT'S LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF THE ISSUE FOR EASY REMOVAL.

OVER A HALF OF A POUND OF MAGAZINE THAT HAS TO BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED!

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saturation point will soon be reached and my interest as to how Frank Frazetta did or did not influence an artist will begin to decline. (It's true that artists are being interviewed over again, but if different questions are asked there is nothing wrong with it. In INFINITY we have stressed "first" interviews and we have done so — Frazetta, Jones, Brunner, Warren, and Wrightson were all "firsts". The Frazetta influence is evident in the work of many of the artists we interview and we feel its a good question to ask—ed. note)

The improvement of Infinity 3 over your first issue is mind-boggling! The quality and expertise of the magazine is *really* great; You are learning more effective ways to display your drawing and ideas. You show a willingness to change and you apparently have sufficient funds and energy to produce a quality zine on a faster-than-once-a-year schedule.

You ask the readers what they would like to see in your magazine. Here is what I would like to see.

1) A wider range of artists. I would like to see drawings by Gaugham, Freas, Thorne, Kubert, Adams, Gil Kane, Ivie, Ken Kelly, Wood, Black, Morrow, and Severin. Also—Kirby and Steranko. Issue Three was dominated by members of the Frazetta-Jones-Wrightson school. I would prefer to see a greater diversity of style. (We'd like to have art by every one of the artists you mention, and we tried to get it. In certain cases we were successful, in others we were not. Some of those artists will not take fan work, some we haven't been able to contact—ed. note)

Yours,
John Onoda

The rest of John's letter talked about ideas of contests to get fan writers and fan artists to contribute. I don't believe such gimmicks will work, and I won't try them. After constantly asking for contributions I've been disappointed too often to offer a prize for a contribution.

Dear Gary and Adam,

Many thanks for Infinity 3 that I just got. It is better than the second issue, and even if some illos had better be left unpublished (I think of the Finlay) it is a very good artizine and I shall speak of it in ALFRED, PHENIX, and in the Spanish magazine BANG: it's worth it! I shall send you those mags when I get them.

About GB Love and his RBCC, I can say that there is much more than 500 serious comic collectors who have never seen it (RBCC): the European ones. Most people in France, Spain, Belgium, and Italia that wrote to RBCC never got an answer! I have personally written, being the only French professional reveiwer of *Us*, the comic zine, and I have never gotten one word after, maybe, 4 letters. People who don't answer to one of my letters, . . . well, it can happen, but those who don't answer several...his was the first and, I hope, the last time.

Sincerely,
Jean Pierre Dionnet

I wonder how many people recognize Jean? If you're a foreign comics bug then you must be familiar with Phenix and Alfred, two ultra-high quality mags of comic art. Jean is France's number 1 zine reviewer and I hope he'll accept the grammatical changes I made on his letter, being as how he had some trouble with our cranky language (but I'll de damned if I could write something like the above in French!) In any case, Jean, thanks for your support and comments; one note... GB Love is a very VERY busy fellow and has a handicap to boot. Considering the RBCC and how much this one man puts out a month, I think people can realize that he isn't careless, but rather an incredibly versatile person, and it took us quite a while to realize this. GB produces a 130 page offset magazine every month, Collage every 3 weeks or so, not to mention all the other SFCA publications, so I think people can see he's one busy guy! But we do thank you for writing and urge our readers to pick up a copy of Phenix—it's time they see how far behind the US comics are left by the Europeans!

Dear Gary,

I've just received your handsome package of "*Infinity #3.*" The quality of the art was pretty fair and the quantity was amazing. I was very surprised by the bonus sketch sections.

A bit of minor criticism, though. I feel it is quite unnecessary for the reader to know when a tape has run out in an interview. A bit of editing of such trivial comments would make the interviews less amateurish. I was also a bit irked to see the Frazetta sketch printed negative.

On the other hand I was quite impressed by your Roy Krenkel portfolio. The usual fanzine "portfolio" contains about three pieces. You printed quite a good quantity and variety of his work.

Mort Walker's humorous article was refreshing and a surprise. Another thing I enjoyed was your letter section in which you answered letters intelligently and gracefully accepted constructive criticism, a rare thing in fandom and fanzines in general.

Keep up the good work!

Best for your future,
William Stout

Amen!

Tom Yeates II
717 Cortlandt Drive
Sacramento, Calif. 95825

8/30/71

Dear Adam,

I feel that I must commend you and Gary on your

outstanding achievements in Infinity III, it is superb. I am not much of an authority on the subject, and rather at a loss when it comes to 'fanzine', 'prozine', 'artzine', 'crudzine', etc. But I can recognize a good 'magazine' when I see one!

I thoroughly enjoyed the whole thing from cover to cover. Roy Krenkle's and Frank Brunner's art were of unbelievably high quality throughout the whole thing. I think the J. Jones, and Wrightson work were also extra exceptional. I could go on and on listing the good characteristics, but the not-so-good ones are much less, so I'll tackle them.

First off, I didn't much care for the back cover of Vol. I, the monster looked good, but the rest sort of stunk. Kline is a good artist, but his heroes always look like they stepped out of a 'brylcream' commercial. Also a lot of the illustrations were not signed, and I can't *always* tell just by the style of the drawing, maybe you could do something like the Contents of #2, which was very useful. Another thing (Legend #1 did it also) is that your Contents said "such & such is on page so and so", but I couldn't find any page numbers!

I think it was great the way you put that very rough Williamson sketch right under your answer to that guy who didn't like rough sketches. I think you should keep putting them in. Even if some of these are not great works of art they are just plain fun to look at. Your one Frazetta was not much, but it did have a bit of his 'magic' in it, and was very worthwhile. I did not much care for the supplement. I think you should have put its art and ads throughout the other parts of the magazine. Except that "273'C" AD, it was *way* below your standard and should have been left out altogether. If you must have ads like that, make them better looking!

Well I am about out of paper, so here is $2.00 for #IV, the book sounds great, but you should have more art by fans. (Because that's exactly what I am)!

So 'till next time... happy publishing!

Sincerely,
Tom Yeats II

Thanks for the kind words, Tom. A few comments... that Willy sketch under the letter from Mr. Rew was unintentional, but thanks for pointing it out, it was a bit ironic. As for the -273 ad, it was a ready sheet, not a page in the issue, but it looked okay to me... typeset and all. I guess you were referring to Neal Pozner's art. Well, Neal got another one for ya! Incidentally, I'm printing Tom's address because he's a fan artist looking for places to contribute, so take a look at his work... I think you'll like it.

WESTERN UNION
TO: ADAM MALIN AND GARY BERMAN

Dear Guys / Stop / from the publishers of Phase— Jim, Sal, and Doug.

What can I say about three guys as adorable as this, except "GO PHASE!", which happens to be THE BEST stripzine on the market. Doug does the stripping! No, support Phase, it's damned good.

Dear Gary,

Infinity 3 was great. It certainly was a definite improvement. The covers were superb. The Brunner cover was the best I've seen him do to date.

The best part was the Jeff Jones art and article and Roy Krenkel's folio. Wrightson's work is always pleasing and Brunner's has improved tremendously.

The supplement was a nice bonus. Yes, I think the sketch section is very interesting. I would like to see a semi-detailed rough and next to it, the finished pieces.

Best,
Rich Catizone

Well, Rich, I'm glad you enjoyed issue 3, now give us an idea of what you thought of issue 4.

Well, folks, that brings us to the close of this issue's "Viewpoint". We feel we've given fair representation of the mail we've received, and if the fact that there are no bad letters hints at anything, remember, National Lampoon doesn't even take them! They write their own. So write, gang, write, write, write

LAST MINUTE NOTICES

Welcome home, Johnny! Doug Murray, one of our staff and co-editor of Heritage, has finally returned from North Korea after nearly nine months of leave, and we're glad he's back.

(c) 1971 Kenneth Smith's

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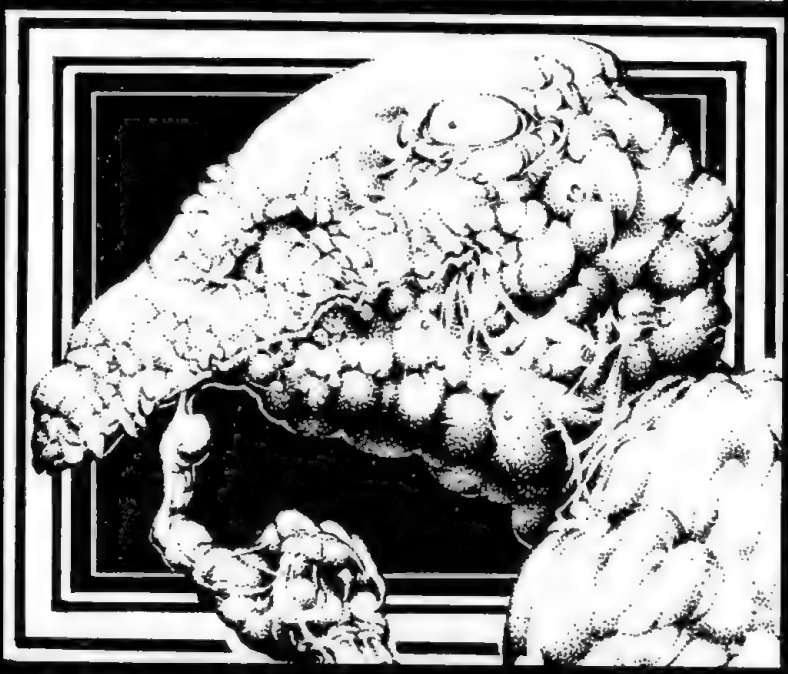

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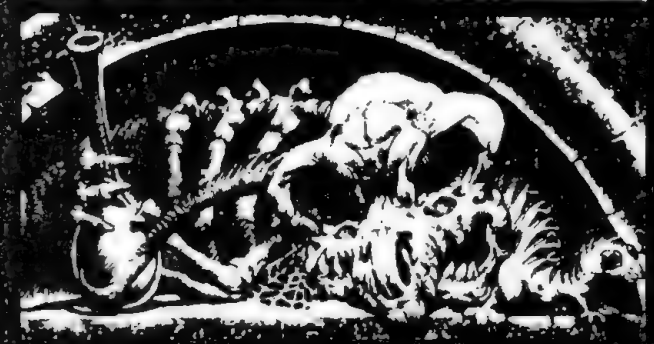

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WRITTEN BY ADAM MALIN
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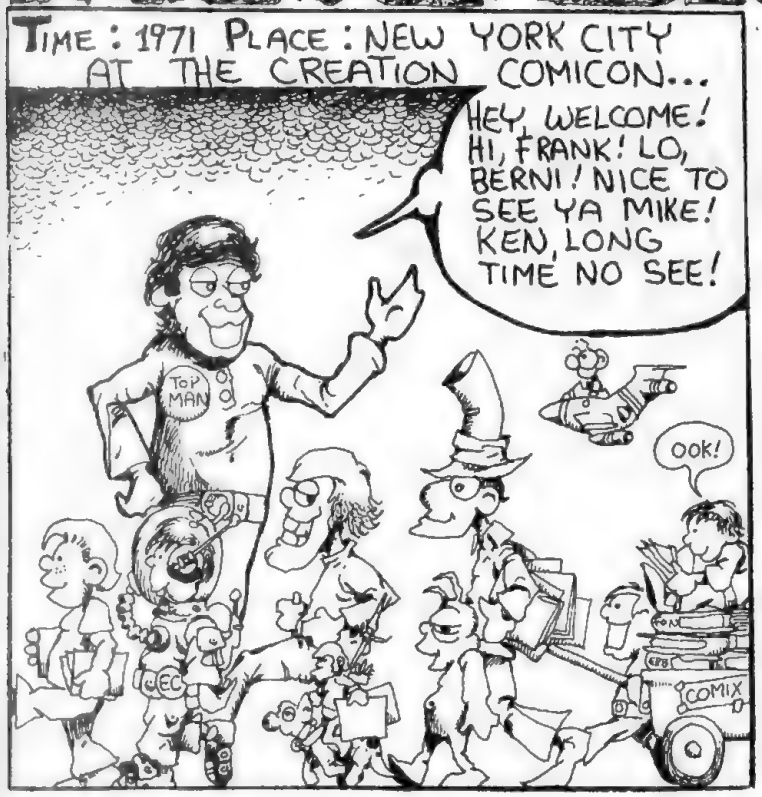
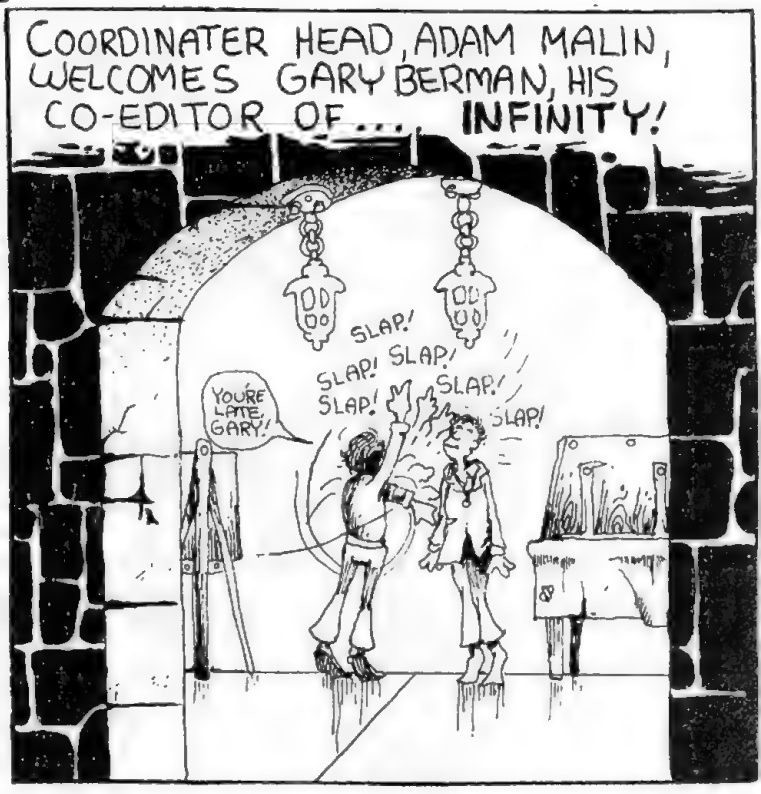
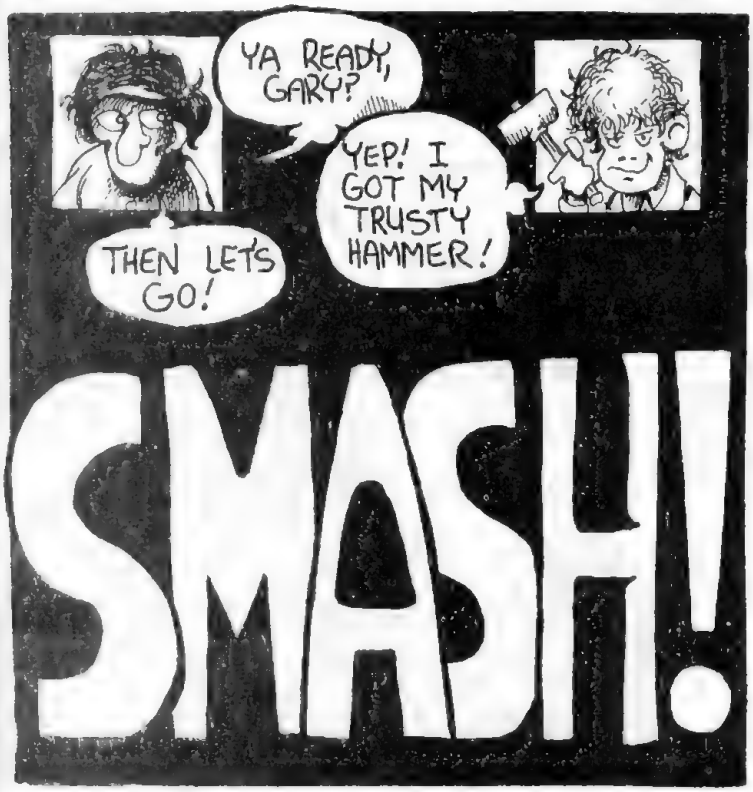

TIME: 1971 PLACE: NEW YORK CITY AT THE CREATION COMICON...
HEY, WELCOME! HI, FRANK! LO, BERNI! NICE TO SEE YA MIKE! KEN, LONG TIME NO SEE!
TOP MAN
OOK!
COMIX

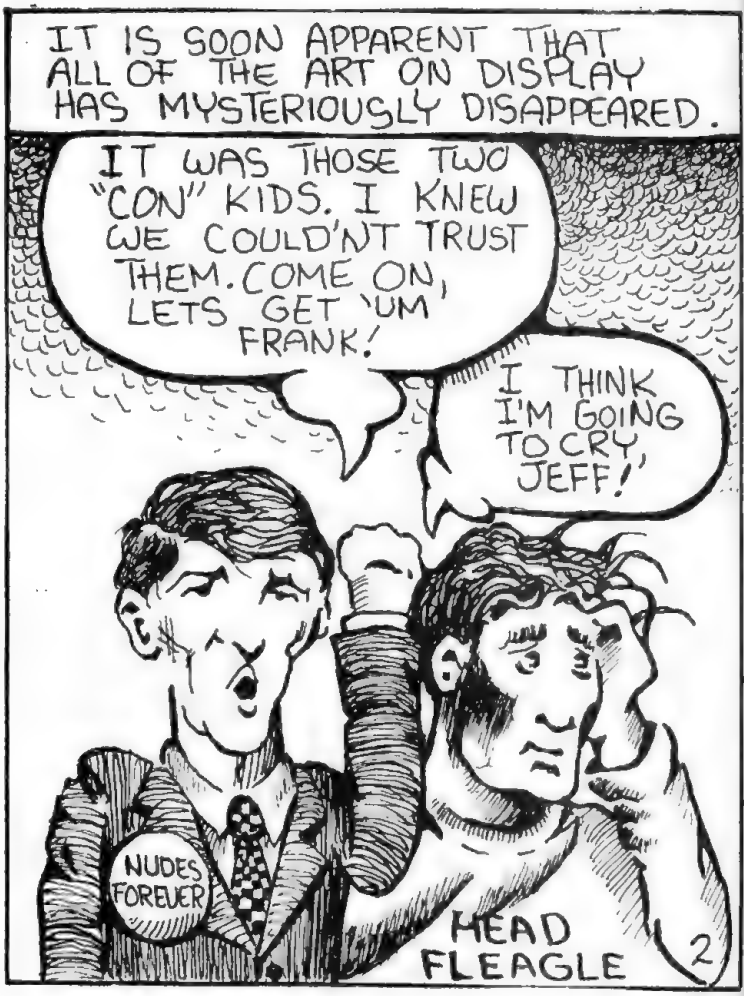




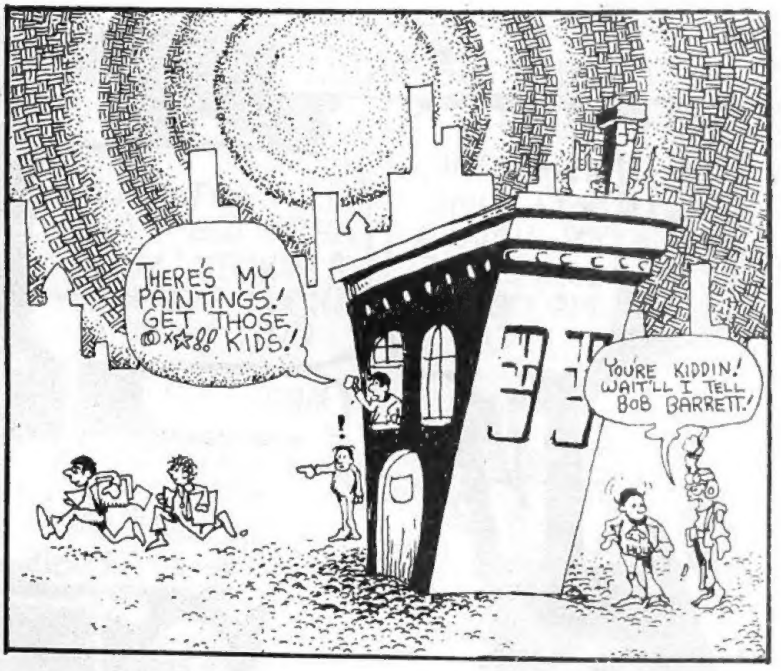
WE MADE IT THROUGH THE REAR EXIT WITH NO TROUBLE, I THINK WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT!
FRAZETTA'S, JONES, WRIGHTSON, KALUTA, ORIGINALS, ALL MINE! ALL MINE! HO BOY!
THE POPE HAS RYTHMN

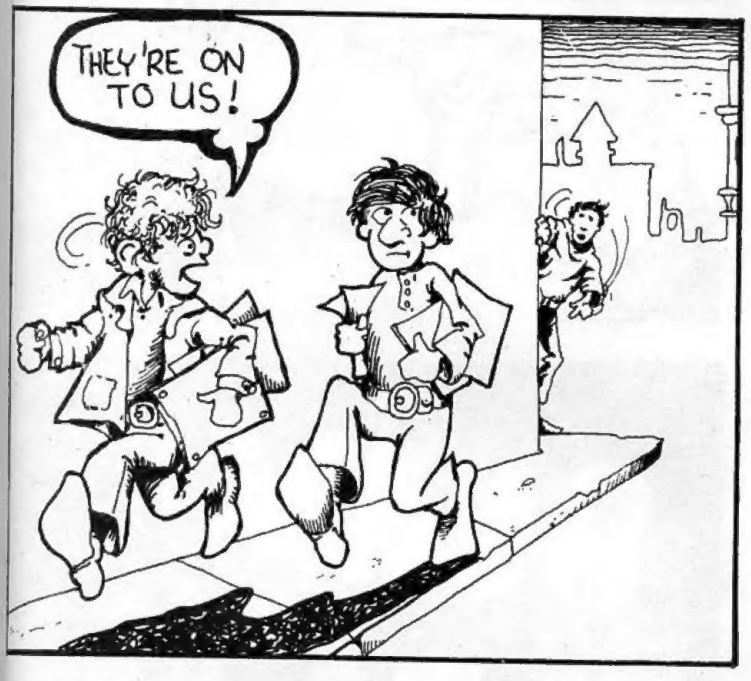
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE CON...
MY GOD! MY OILS ARE GONE!

HEAD FLEAGLE
OK. WHO WAS IT. WHO TOOK MY ARTWORK.
NO KILL. NO KILL THIS ONE, MR. FRAZETTA.
OOK


IT IS SOON APPARENT THAT ALL OF THE ART ON DISPLAY HAS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED.
IT WAS THOSE TWO "CON" KIDS. I KNEW WE COULD'NT TRUST THEM. COME ON, LETS GET 'UM FRANK!
I THINK I'M GOING TO CRY, JEFF!
NUDES FOREVER
HEAD FLEAGLE
2

OFFICER! ALL OF FRAZETTA'S OILS WERE STOLEN FROM THE "CREATION" CON!
HULK
POLICE DEPT.
?


THERE'S MY PAINTINGS! GET THOSE @*☆!! KIDS!
YOU'RE KIDDIN! WAIT'LL I TELL BOB BARRETT!
!


THEY'RE ON TO US!

GET THEM! GET MY PAINTINGS, GET THOSE TWO GUYS!
DESTROY!
SNORT!
HEAD FLEAGLE
GRAB 'EM!
CRUSH!
BAD SCENE!

LET'S HIDE IN THIS DARK GLOOMY ALLEY!
DARK GLOOMY ALLEY
GET GOIN'! HERE THEY COME! GULP!
SKIDD!

THERE THEY GO!
DIRTY CREEPS!
CLOBBER 'EM!
GOOD! MAYBE WE'LL BE SAFE FOR AWHILE!
3

IN THE ALLEY WE FIND...
LISTEN, THE NEXT TIME YOU HAVE A CON, LEAVE ME OUT OF IT!
ALL RIGHT. NOW AFTER WE— WAIT A MINUTE! YOU DIDN'T SEE KIRBY OUT THERE?
KIRBY? NO.
GOOD, FOR A MINUTE, I THOUGHT WE WERE IN TROUBLE.

WHILE OUTSIDE...
YES I'm SURE I DON'T WANT MY NEXT CON IN AUSTRALIA.
OK IT WAS JUST A THOUGHT.
YOU READY.
NOT UNTIL YOU GIVE BACK MY DON HECK ORIGINAL.
ITS NOT POLITE TO STARE SON.
OK. HERE. NOW LETS GO!!!
CLIK
CLAK

GOODNIGHT, ADAM!
GOODNIGHT, GARY!

BLAM!
BLEED
BLEED
BLEED
BLEED
SPLAT!
BLAM!
BL
PA-DING!
KER-THUD
FIN
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TODD